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ABSTRACT

Comparative data from three middle schools, all in one large urban school district in the Pacific Northwest, are used to identify criteria for evaluating student discipline policies and to generate theoretical statements of how school administration affects student behavior. An introduction summarizes the study's goals and assumptions and discusses potential variances in policy content and effectiveness. Background information is provided on the following: the policies of the district studied and the characteristics of participating schools: administrative organization, policy content, and policy initiation and modification in each school; and the process of data collection through examining school discipline referral records and through teacher and student questionnaires. The next two sections report and analyze findings. Section E describes the differences among schools in three aspects of policy and analyzes the causes of policy differences. Section F describes differences in teachers' and students' acceptance of policies and the incidence of misbehavior and analyzes the reasons for these differences. Finally, the study's hypotheses are reformulated and summarized. Sample teacher and student questionnaires are appended. References are included. (MCG)

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## A. INTRODUCTION

### Project Overview and Goals

This research explored variations instudent discipline policies and in the effectiveness of such policies. The research was motivated by both practical and theoretical interests. The practical interest was in the effectiveness of school policies intended to limit or reduce student discipline problems. This interest was the basis for illuminative case studies of particular schools' policies and problems. The theoretical interest was in the causal processes underlying school management of student behavior; we attempted to develop one facet of a general paradigm for the linkage between school administration and student behavior (Duckworth 1981, 1983). Hence, there was also a theoretical basis for the case studies.

The research sites were three middle schools in a single urban school district. Case studies were conducted in the 1982-83 school year. Beginning in December 1982, we employed a variety of research methods to construct a description of each school's policy on student discipline. The research methods were motivated by two basic research questions:

1. What factors account for differences among schools in discipline policy--i.e., in
   a. policy content
   b. policy initiation and modification and
   c. policy enforcement?

2. What factors account for differences among schools in policy effectiveness--i.e., in
   a. the level of acceptance of discipline policy by teachers and students and
   b. the incidence of student misbehavior?

These questions were applied to the range of problems suggested by the term student discipline.

As a research strategy, we studied each of the three schools as a case in student discipline policy. We then used comparisons among the three

cases as a basis for hypotheses that address each of the research questions. Although time at each site was too limited to allow for an ethnography, we attempted to understand discipline policy as a facet of each school's culture. Our main research activity was interviewing. Because we could not hope to interview more than a fraction of the teachers and students in each school, however, we supplemented the interview with a brief questionnaire survey of both teachers and students. We also inspected written records regarding discipline in each school, including policy documents, files on student rule infractions, and their handling by school personnel.

In terms of our practical interest, this study describes and illuminates particular situations in order to help school administrators and teachers understand each others' perceptions and actions better. From this they can gain insights into aspects of school policy that could be improved. The study is not an evaluation of the three schools' policies, however, because it was neither comprehensive enough nor tightly controlled enough in its methodology to ensure objectivity and warrant causal inference.

In terms of our theoretical interest, this study is comparative and exploratory. Our goal was to develop hypotheses that delimit the processes implicated in the research questions and that propose answers to those questions. Such hypotheses would constitute the agenda for future, more systematic research.

This report, then, has different purposes for different readers. For the school administrator or teacher (including the research subjects), it describes and raises questions about student discipline policy at each of three schools. For the social scientist, it compares the student discipline policies of three schools in the same district and relates those policies to several criteria for evaluating policy effectiveness--teachers' and students' acceptance of policies and the incidence of student misbehavior.

## Practical Starting Point: The Problem of Middle-School Discipline

Student discipline affects a school's instructional program. Indeed, studies of effective schools emphasize the importance of an orderly, nonoppressive climate for conducting classroom lessons (Edmonds 1979; Brookover and others 1979). By contrast, students in conflict with peers as well as with teachers and administrators drain time and energy away from teaching and learning. The attendance problem that can result from such conflict is also important because, as Stallings (1981) has argued, students who are absent or late reduce learning time, disrupt teaching, and prevent administrators from devoting more time to improving instruction.

Despite rhetoric about teacher, student, and parent responsibility for student discipline, school principals and their administrative assistants set a school's disciplinary standards and are accountable for the implementation of those standards. Hence, studying student discipline at the school level is warranted by practical considerations even though a full explanation of discipline problems would have to include phenomena beyond a principal's control--such as family and neighborhood conditions, peer-group norms, and economic factors.

One study of effective high schools in London, England, found that schools serving comparable populations had differing levels of discipline problems (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, and Ouston 1979). The researchers pointed to the importance of school "ethos" as one explanation of these differences. Our study, however, employs the concepts of "policy" to explain such differences and looks at the administrator's role in developing and implementing discipline policy.

In recent decades, student discipline policies in American schools have been very diverse. Some schools' policies include detailed rules for

student behavior and strict enforcement procedures. At other schools--which advocates sees as democratic and opponents see as permissive--students and teachers articulate policy within a general framework of compliance with law. Because discipline is a perennial public concern, and because ineffective policy is held responsible for crises, such as violence or drug dealing, discipline policies tend to swing from one extreme to the other in response to dramatic incidents. Between crises, administrators adjust policy according to their general impressions of whether or not it is "working." In their study of two schools, Duke and Meckel reported that

> when a new rule, sanction, or intervention program was introduced, it tended to derive from the efforts of one or two administrators...Little attempt was made to sit down with teachers and students and discuss the matter or how how to deal with it (1980, p. 348).

They also reported that the assessment of a new policy's effectiveness is subject to

> illusions of improvement [that] exist when people believe that the expenditure of time, energy, and concern constitutes sufficient evidence that problems are being ameliorated and when the available data on the actual extent of the problems is insufficient to permit these people to verify their belief (1980, p. 328).

One practical purpose for our study is to show how a comprehensive, comparative description of school policy can help administrators go beyond surface considerations. Because this study's scope is limited, we cannot apply generalizations based on our findings here to public schools in general. This effort, however, does identify important criteria for determining policy effectiveness and generates hypotheses for a larger-scaled study of discipline problems and effective policy options.

Studies on student discipline policy are needed at all levels of schooling. The middle-grade school, however, may be the critical case because the folklore of teaching identifies early adolescents as having the

most discipline problems (Lipsitz 1982). Statistics bear this out, as Williams reported: "Middle or junior high schools typically experience the highest rate of [student] suspension of any building level" (1983, p. 8). Yet research on this problem is scarce. Only recently has research on effective classroom management techniques been extended to include the middle-grade school (Evertson, Sanford, and Emmer 1981). Metz's 1978 study of desegregation in junior high schools developed a proto-theory about student discipline that informs our study, while Duke's work provides our research direction (Duke 1978, 1980; Duke and Meckel 1980).

## Theoretical Starting Point: A Tripartite Construct of Policy

Policy is the major theoretical construct of this study. For some, policy is virtually synonymous with official directives, rules, or decisions, which accords with a common definition of "policy": "a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and usually determine present and future decisions" (Webster's 3rd New International Dictionary, Unabridged). In their study of elementary school organization, for example, Meyer and his colleagues employed a concept of "explicit school-wide policies" that included "general guidelines" and "detailed policies" (1978). They found little "detailed" school-wide policy regarding instruction, and so concluded that schools only loosely control what goes on in the classroom. On the other hand, at the University of Oregon's Center for Educational Policy and Management researchers using similar definitions of policy have found that certain official directives do affect educational programs. These researchers--Goldschmidt, Bowers, Riley, and Stuart--defined policy as "directives that determine the development and implementation of educational programs" (1984, pp. 5-6) in their study of collective bargaining's impact on

educational policy.

Our study includes the content of rules as one important component of policy. However, we employ a broader definition that one of this study's authors suggested in an earlier paper: "The ongoing process of integration of purposes" in an organization (Duckworth 1981, p. 17). This definition accords with others in Webster's Third New International Dictionary that refer to process more than to directive--"prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs" and "management or procedure based primarily on material interest." Thus, the definition in our study treats official decisions and codified rules as one component of policy--a crystallization of certain purposes as a framework for daily interaction.

The second component of policy is the process of initiation and modification, which Duke and Meckel refer to as "macro-decision-making" (1980). We distinguish it as a component of policy separate from policy content because the circumstances surrounding the initiation or modification of a rule or directive can influence its later interpretation. For example, legal argument over the correct application of an act of Congress often refers to the "intent" of Congress as evidenced by records of the deliberations prior to legislation. Ongoing deliberations that have implications for an existing rule can also influence its interpretation, especially when it might be abandoned or altered. School administrators' avoidance of public debate over rules probably stems from this awareness that rules may lose their force while "under consideration."

The third component of policy is the process of enforcing rules in daily practice. Duke and Meckel call this "micro-decision-making"--the layer of particular interpretations, definitions, and applications that make up the operational reality of rules (1980). The interests of both teachers and administrative staff members and the purposes of those who issue rules and

directives all center around enforcement--the crucial test of a policy's "wisdom," "prudence," and "material interest." Furthermore, there is apparently a legal basis for including enforcement as a component of policy, since, as one principal in our study remarked, "A rule that is not enforced is no rule at all." The interpretation of rules is colored by daily practice; to ignore this is to misunderstand school policy. Schools are, after all, like families in that they too are governed both by written codes and by shared perceptions of the routines for handling affairs.

Thus, we have broadened our construct of policy to include three separate components: the content of policy (rules in particular), the process of rule initiation and modification, and the process of rule enforcement.

## School Policy

Using this tripartite construct of school policy, we posed the first research question,

> What factors account for differences among schools in discipline policy--i.e., in
> a. policy content
> b. policy initiation and modification and
> c. policy enforcement?

This question assumes that such differences exist among schools. We consider some important possible variations below.

### 1. General Differences

Policy Content. Policy content--that is, the content of rules--can be classified according to Duke's outline. Duke defined rules as "formal statements of expected behavior (other than statutory laws) for which consequences exist if the expectations are not met" (1978, p. 118). In his outline he distinguishes three areas of student behavior that rules control:

school and class attendance, conduct outside class, and conduct in class (including general deportment and academic work). We set out to describe rules of each kind and to note whether they were specified at the district, school, or classroom level. We also identified written procedures for putting rules into effect, monitoring students' compliance, and responding to rule infractions because schools may differ in the volume, detail, and prescriptiveness of such procedures. Differences in policy content suggest a formal organization of staff members' responsibilities, a sequence of punishments, a strategy for correction, and the coordination of interdependent roles.

We identified the content of rules by inspecting both written codes and follow-up memoranda and forms from the district and the schools. Because we emphasize the cultural mediation of written codes, we devoted much time in our interviews with administrators and teachers to their perceptions of the rules--especially where rules had been amended without an official written followup.

Policy Initiation and Modification. We found our interest in policy initiation and modification on the varying levels of teachers' participation in rule development and on the deliberateness of rule change. Duke, among others, has argued that the consequences of a policy depend on the participation of those who must carry out that policy (Duke 1980). The deliberateness of rule changes, raised earlier as a concern, is also important here because policy may be modified abruptly during a crisis. We obtained information on this component of policy from interviews with administrators, including district officials who were familiar with the backgrounds of district policy and of the schools in the study. We combined that information with information we gained on the same policy changes from teacher interviews and the teacher questionnaire. We asked them which, if

any, of six school rules they had participated in developing.

Policy Enforcement. In studying policy enforcement processes, we were concerned with the various ways policy implementation corresponded to written code. Do some schools, for example, have a more cut-and-dried application of written rules than others? Do schools vary widely in the way they respond to rules whose contents leave room for some discretionary application within district guidelines? One measure of enforcement we obtained from school records was each school's apparent preference for certain administrative responses to student referrals.

Consistency is an aspect of enforcement that might be undermined when some teachers in a school are strict while others are lenient or when the application of rules varies from case to case. Duke and Meckel reported that some administrators in the schools they studied had failed to communicate with one another about their handling of the same student discipline problem. We too inquired into the consistency of rule enforcement both in our interviews with administrators, teachers, and students and in teacher questionnaire items on whether they were strict or lenient in enforcing rules and whether it was the total staff's business to enforce certain rules. We also identified differences in teachers' enforcement of rules by analyzing the number of referrals each teacher had submitted to the office during the year.

Strictness and leniency, then, are the two obvious poles of consistency--one aspect of enforcement. Another aspect of enforcement is evenhandedness. To measure this, we asked teachers whether some students got away with breaking particular rules more than other students. A third aspect of enforcement is the school personnel's expectation that students learn self discipline. This was measured by a questionnaire item that asked teachers about the importance of students' learning to make their own decisions about

obeying rules.

The student questionnaire asked students about their knowledge of school rules. In particular, we were interested in the distribution of rule booklets to students and how often students were surprised to learn that something they had done was against the rules. Student questionnaire data also provided information about what might be called "Type I" and "Type II" errors in enforcement--letting students get away with breaking rules (Type I) and blaming students for breaking rules when it wasn't their fault (Type II).

## 2. Explanatory Factors

The research question, "What factors account for differences among schools in discipline policy?" might be answered in terms of the internal dynamics of the three policy components. For example, perhaps the breadth of teachers' participation in policy initiation and modification affects the volume and prescriptiveness of rules. Similarly, perhaps the consistency of enforcement is a result of explicit written rules. In analyzing data on policy components, we tried to be sensitive to such interactions, which amounts to improving the validity of our tripartite definition of policy. This also led to initial thinking about the causes of policy differences, which depended on two prior conditions: the discipline philosophies of staff members and the challenge the student body posed for the school.

Discipline Policy. According to Metz (1978), who developed a typology of discipline philosophies (authoritarian, incorporative, developmental, and therapeutic), discipline philosophy was the major explanation of policy differences among schools. It affects policy by coloring debate on new rules, by influencing the working of rules, and by mediating their enforcement--particularly in the daily interpretation of misbehavior and response to infractions. To describe discipline philosophy

in this study, we interviewed people about their perceptions of student discipline problems and their strategies for dealing with such problems. We probed for assumptions about education, about students, and about social order.

We found that the district itself provided a strong philosophical message on discipline policy and we structured our interviews to discover the subjects' posture towards this policy context. Because we studied schools in only one district, we cannot assess the strength of differences among districts. However, we did examine the district context closely to identify elements that might be looked at in a future study. Because we studied schools in only one district, we cannot assess the strength of differences among districts. However, we did examine the district context closely to identify elements that might be looked at in a future study.

Student Characteristics. The second potential cause of policy differences is the challenge students posed for each school. Duckworth (1976) found that teachers of low-income students developed more rules in their classrooms than teachers of middle-income students. Teachers of low-income students also saw their students as more likely to have problems following procedures than did teachers of middle-income students. Cohen, Miller, Bredo, and Duckworth (1977) found that autocratic, directive principals were appreciated more in low-income schools than in middle-income schools. The schools in the present study were selected because of the varying challenges posed by their students, although all the district's schools faced some challenges from their students. We supplemented objective data on the students' demographic characteristics with data on school staff members' perceptions of the students.

Teacher Characteristics. As the project proceeded, a third cause of policy differences was added, the characteristics and organization of the

teaching staff. As we pursued the content of rules, it became apparent that some schools had a strong intermediary tier of teacher teams who were involved in developing discipline policy. Hence, a description of the teaching staffs discipline management assignments is included. Also included is the data on teacher experience and turnover, which might influence the development of staff consensus on school policy.

## Policy Effectiveness

The second research question asked,

What factors account for differences among schools in policy effectiveness--i.e.,in
a. the acceptance of discipline policy by teachers and students and
b. the incidence of student misbehavior?

### 1. General Differences

Policy Acceptance by Teachers. Teacher acceptance of policy is important because of the limited ability of the district and the schools to monitor policy enforcement. Because the classroom is the teacher's zone of discretion, teacher acceptance of policy is likely to affect policy enforcement there. Teachers may also enforce policy they do not accept because of peer pressure or fear of administrative reprisals, but the result of such unwilling enforcement may be general resentment, dissatisfaction with the school, and demoralization. These, in turn, may lead to rapid teacher turnover and a breakdown in school communication and coordination.

We examined teacher acceptance of policy in interviews with teachers and in teachers' responses to a number of questionnaire items measuring their satisfaction with policy. The questionnaire items asked about the faculty's endorsement of the school's discipline philosophy, the faculty's support for

policy initiation procedures and levels of their participation in such procedures, the adequacy of school discipline policy, and the faculty's agreement with the administrator's management of school discipline. In addition, the questionnaire presented teachers with a list of six school rules ad asked whether the penalties for breaking any of them were too light. The questionnaire also asked which rules, if any, were unnecessary, which rules affected so few students that they did not need to be formalized, which rules caused more problems than they solved, and which rules violated students' rights. We also asked about teacher acceptance of school policy in our interviews with school administrators.

Policy Acceptance by Students. In addition to teacher acceptance of school policy, we were interested in student acceptance. In the study mentioned above, Metz pointed out that middle-grade students' sense of authority changes from the personal authority of teachers to an abstract conception of authority based on society's general moral principles. Duckworth (1979) found that middle-school students were critical of their teachers in a way that was rare among elementary-school students. Middle-school students who experience school policy as oppressive, inept, or unfair are apt to be uncooperative with the directives of school authority, and they may fail to develop a sense of the general moral order that confers authority to the officials of public institutions. Thus, student acceptance of school policy is important in its own right. It is also important because students must be willing to obey rules on their own--without supervision--for policy to work.

The increased size of secondary schools, moreover, requires even more student self-control for order to be realized. Indeed, Duke and Meckel noted that "few direct sanctions could be brought to bear on students who did not want to attend class" in the schools they studied (1980, p. 347). Finally,

student acceptance is an important influence on classroom work because students ultimately control the quality of their work, not the teachers; this is the students' "sone of discretion," whether recognized as such by school authorities or not. If students develop strategies for circumventing the policies they oppose, such strategies are likely to undermine the whole educational process.

We measured student acceptance with student questionnaire items that asked whether rules were fairly enforced, whether teachers were too strict, whether the school had too many rules, and which, if any, rules needed changing. Interviews with a few students in each school allowed us to elaborate on these responses and obtain a more detailed impression of student perspectives on school policy.

The Incidence of Student Misbehavior. In addition to teachers' and students' acceptance of policy, the study focused on the behavioral consequences of policy. This third criterion of policy effectiveness was paramount for the project's practical interest because limiting or reducing discipline problems is a primary concern of school administrators and teachers. Our measures of the incidence of student misbehavior included rates of student infractions of rules for attendance, general student conduct, and classroom department. We estimated these rates from school and district records and from students' own reports of rule infractions. Information on rates of student discipline problems also came from interviews with school administrators and teachers and from questionnaire items that asked teachers about the seriousness of discipline problems in their schools and about recent trends in the rates of discipline problems.

Another measure of the incidence of student misbehavior was the amount of school time devoted to managing discipline problems. Although, like policy acceptance, the costs of managing discipline are intimately bound

up with enforcement, they merit attention in connection with the benefits of containing problems. The questionnaire asked teachers about the proportions of class time and the school day they devoted to handling discipline problems.

## 2. Explanatory Factors

We expected teacher acceptance of policy to be intimately bound with teacher and administrator enforcement of policy, and we hoped to untangle these relationships in the course of describing policy at each of the three schools. In addition, we thought that teacher policy acceptance would be affected by how much teachers' and administrators' discipline philosophies agreed. We also expected teacher acceptance to be influenced by teacher participation in policy development. Student acceptance, on the other hand, we thought would be influenced by policy development processes, the prescriptiveness of rules, and the consistency and equity of enforcement. As Rutter and his colleagues found, "unofficial sanctions may feed resentment" (1979, p. 125).

We expected student misbehavior to be related to student characteristics because prior research had found that disruption in junior high schools was related to characteristics of the community served by the school (Gottfredson and Daiger 1979). With Metz (1978), we also expected students' acceptance of policy to mediate its influence on their behavior. Finally, we thought that the strength and consistency of enforcement would influence student behavior (Gottfredson and Daiger 1979). Measures of these variables were described above.

We developed this research report from our initial preparation of case studies on each of three middle schools. Each case study set forth the background of the school, the characteristics of students and staff, the

components of discipline policy, and evidence on the effectiveness of discipline policy in that school, but in themselves the case studies included minimal evaluation or comparison. We also examined the district's emerging discipline policy as a contextual backdrop for describing school operations and concerns. The present report brings together these separate descriptive studies[1] to examine difference and similarities in the schools' policies as they related to our conceptualization of discipline policy and its effectiveness. Finally, these comparisons lead to a revised model for examining school discipline policies and suggest a series of hypotheses for further research.

[1]A complete project report, including these case studies, a district policy description, and appendixed data collection instruments, is available at cost by writing the Center for Educational Policy and and Management at the University of Oregon.

## B. DISTRICT POLICY AND PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

We conducted this study in a large urban district in the Pacific Northwest with over 50,000 students enrolled in grades K-12. The district began its organization of middle schools about ten years ago partly in response to pressures for desegregation because the middle school offered a way to merge former elementary schools serving different segments of the population. The district had 12 middle schools, most including grades 6-8, that enrolled a total of over 7,000 students. Approximately 30 percent of the middle school population belonged to what the district defined as an ethnic minority; about half of these students were black, a third were of Asian origin, and the remainder were either Native American or Hispanic. The district as a whole exhibited declining enrollment, particularly among white students in the secondary schools. Because of declining enrollment and the general fiscal constraints posed in recent years by voters' opposition to increased property taxes, the district had been closing elementary and high schools.

### District Discipline Policy

The formal statement of district policy on student discipline was the Policies and Regulations of the district, dating from 1971, with additions and amendments made as late as 1980. During the year of the study, a further revision was under way.

The sections on "standards of conduct" gave primary emphasis to "a climate in the schools which is appropriate for institutions of learning and which assures the safety and welfare of personnel and students." The superintendent was empowered to develop rules and procedures whereby "disruptive students" would "receive corrective counseling and be subject to disciplinary sanctions." Pursuant to this board policy, an administrative

regulation followed in which the superintendent listed "abuses that most often violate the essential requirements of good citizenship and necessitate disciplinary action." That list is given in Figure 1.

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Figure 1
Student Role Infractions Identified in District Policy

1. Disregard for attendance procedures as defined by law.
2. Insubordination, willful disobedience, or open defiance to school authority.
3. Assaults, fights, extortion, setting fires, setting false alarms, bomb threats, vandalism, forgery, theft, and other such acts.
4. Profane language and/or indecent gestures.
5. Persistent, disruptive or abusive conduct that deprives other students of the right to learn.
6. Willful or malicious injury of furniture, buildings, fences, trees or other parts of the school property, including the cutting, marking or defacing the same in any manner.
7. Carrying guns, or having guns in lockers or desks.
8. The possession or use of alcohol, drugs, narcotics or tobacco in any form on or about the school premises or at any school activity.

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An additional policy restricted the school's right to dictate student dress and grooming to cases of disruption of educational process or endangering other persons.

After this list of potential infractions in Policies and Regulations was a statement of "philosophy for discipline." This statement declared a corrective approach to discipline that "shall be based on a counseling philosophy---designed to promote behavioral changes [and]...help students understand their obligations to others." Sanctions "shall reflect concern of school personnel for the dignity and growth potential of each individual."

Thus, the early sections of Policies and Regulations dealing with discipline exhibited a possible tension between the tendency to set up a system of rules and penalties designed to protect persons and programs in school and the commitment to correct misbehaving students. Subsequent sections of the Policies and Regulations dealt with one or the other of these values--protection and correction. The document's most lengthy section dealt

with formal sanctions--suspensions and expulsions, while on the corrective side, district policy required the school to make "early contact with parents" and develop preventive and corrective strategies. However, the "professional judgment of the administrator" was the foundation for decisions to exclude a student from class for up to two days, to impose a "minor suspension" from all school activities for up to 24 hours (not to become part of the student's record), or to impose a major suspension for up to five days with a required parent conference (and entry into the student's record). The regulation went on to specify procedures for suspension, rights of parents and students (including the student's right to be provided with work assignments), and the conduct of the hearing prior to expulsion (with a special section for handicapped students). Here the tone was primarily punitive, qualified only by the stated responsibility of the school to seek early and less severe remedies whenever possible. The punitive tone was continued in the section on "other disciplinary measures," which authorized after-school detention for up to one-half hour (but forbade lunch detention), empowered the principal to confiscate cigarettes, provided for extra penalties for use of alcohol or drugs, and authorized the district to refer students charged with "unprovoked assault" to criminal prosecution and to require financial restitution from students found to have damaged property in a "malicious" state of mind.

The tone of the policies turned towards correction in a section on "program for disruptive students" where those with psychological difficulties were referred to "special assistance...to reorient their response patterns so that they can become successful in the classroom." The statement was made that "school personnel and the learning program also can contribute to the child's negative behavior through insensitive treatment or lack of understanding." Hence, the principal, with involvement of teachers, was required to develop a school discipline plan "for reaching each student

effectively." Various provisions were made for special personnel and settings and for staff development sessions on working with disruptive students. At the end of this primarily corrective section, however, the tone became protective again:

> Some disruptive children...may be unable to function within the school setting...Teachers cannot be subjected to unusual verbal, physical or psychological threat or abuse...[which] should be reported immediately to the principal for appropriate action.

The Policies and Regulations, then, both underwrote punitive action by administrators in protection of the school and also elaborated efforts to reduce the number of students needing punishment through preventive and corrective programs.

In the decade since the earliest date of operative policies and regulations on student discipline, there had been both political and organizational development of the themes emphasized in the district's formal policy. One important report was that of a commission appointed in 1975 to study the problem of disruptive students. Though it reflected the differing philosophical positions of its members--including concern that "learning disabilities and unreasonable expectations of staff" are principal causes of students' disruptive behavior--the report emphasized the importance of order and protection in a discussion of how dealing with disruptive students reduced a teacher's services to nondisruptive students. The main thrust of the panel's recommendations called for increased involvement of parents and other community agencies in solving student behavior problems that stem from causes beyond the school's control.

An important result of the panel report was the creation of a district office of special youth services and the establishment of a requirement that each school develop "codes of student conduct and discipline within the existing framework of broad district policy." The Coordinator of the Special Youth Services office was directed to monitor discipline

problems, to make recommendations for school programs, to develop experimental classroom methods for dealing with disruptive students, to provide staff development for "remedial approaches to disruptive youth," and to act as liaison with other youth agencies. As part of this administrative reorganizatin, middle schools were given additional funds, controlled by the district coordinator, to assign "learning specialists to work with students prone to discipline problems and those with marked academic problems related to discipline." These specialists, called Student Management Specialists, were to provide and supervise a special program for students referred for disciplinary reasons from their regular classrooms.

Each of the middle schools had a management specialist during the project period. These specialists, though officially teachers with duties assigned by their school principals, were also supervised by their district coordinator. The present coordinator was wholehearted in her commitment to the district's counseling philosophy of discipline but also felt that each school could develop its own approach to solving the students' discipline problems so long as this went beyond reliance on sanctions. She saw it as her position to coordinate and support principals, not to direct or evaluate them. However, she felt that by persuasion and support she had been able to bring focus to the specialist role.

A further development affecting student discipline is found in the district's 1981-83 agreement with the teachers' association. This agreement included a section on student discipline that protected a teacher's discretion in deciding to exclude a student from class for disruptive behavior and spelled out the principal's (or "professional designee's") responsibility to assist the teacher by "handling students removed from class" and by developing and implementing a "mutually acceptable behavior correction plan" for students. In general, teachers were concerned with their ability to conduct lessons for classes of students and were protective

of their decision-making rights in this regard.

## Characteristics of Participating Schools

Our project plan was to study three middle schools that had serious discipline problems and that varied in the types of policy developed to deal with such problems. In making our school selections, we were guided by district staff recommendations. We explained the purpose of the project in our interviews with the school principals and sought their support.

Of the three schools initially recommended, only one ultimately remained in the study. The principal of one of the schools initially selected decided not to participate at a formal meeting with his management staff. His argument was that his school had no serious disciplinary problems and, therefore, was inappropriate for our study. An alternative school was selected.

In the second school to be dropped, initial approval and interviews with the principal and members of the administrative staff all were proceeding well, but our data collection schedule happened to coincide with a separately initiated, district-sponsored review of that school's total program by an outside consultant. Presentation of the review findings had been made just prior to our project's intended survey of teachers and students and may have "contaminated" our data. The district coordinator recommended a substitute school.

The three middle schools that agreed to participate in the study were different from one another in several respects. The first school, referred

to here as Roberts School,[1] served a potentially challenging population of white and black students but had a low incidence of reported discipline problems. It was housed in a two-story brick building in a middle-class neighborhood. On one side of the school, the residences indicated affluence; on the other side, the residences indicated lower levels of income but were well-maintained. The school was located near a small office and shopping area and had more students than the building was designed to hold. This may have resulted from district assignment policy but apparently also reflected the desirability of attending that school. Roberts was a feeder school to an integrated high school; a neighboring middle school fed another high school that enrolled large numbers of low-income minority students.

Characteristics of the student bodies of Roberts School and of the other two middle schools participating in the study are shown in Table 1. Roberts School enrolled 669 students in October, 1982, which was about average for the year. By the end of the 1982-83 school year, 732 students (9 percent more than the October enrollment) had been on the rolls at one time or another. About half the students were bused. Roughly 34 percent of all Roberts students belonged to an ethnic minority as defined by the district; these were primarily black students. Twenty-seven percent of the students were eligible for the federal lunch subsidy. One school administrator opined that almost a third of the school's students came from single-parent and/or financially-strapped families. Entering Roberts students performed at or above the district mean on standardized achievement tests.

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[1]All school names in this report are fictitious. Throughout the study both district-level and school-level administrators were extremely cooperative and open in providing us access to requested data and to persons whom we wished to interview. We are extremely appreciative and remain in debt to these persons and to our participating teachers and students, all of whom remain nameless in this report.

Table 1
Characteristics of Students at Three Middle Schools

| Students | Roberts | Lake | Fort Hudson |
|---|---|---|---|
| Enrollment in October, 1982 | 669 | 632 | 728 |
| Total enrollment during 1982-83 | 732 | 731 | 856 |
| Turnover | 9% | 16% | 18% |
| Ethnic composition (percent of total enrollent) | | | |
| Percent Hispanic | 1% | 1% | 2% |
| Percent Other White | 66% | 85% | 52% |
| Percent Black | 28% | 2% | 37% |
| Percent Native American | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| Percent Asian American | 3% | 10% | 6% |
| Percent eligible for federal lunch subsidy | 27% | 23% | 33% |
| Achievement scores of sixth graders, 1982-83 | | | |
| Reading (district mean=217) | 216 | 212 | 210 |
| Language Arts (district mean=212) | 216 | 209 | 209 |
| Math (district mean=213) | 219 | 214 | 213 |

The second school, referred to as Lake School, was also housed in a two-story brick building in a residential neighborhood. The houses in the immediate vicinity were similar to, but appeared less well-maintained than, those in the less affluent sector of the Roberts School neighborhood. Although the school fronted a busy commercial road, the grounds were spacious, with a pleasant view of nearby hills.

As shown in Table 1, the school enrollment was 632 students in October, 1982, slightly less than Roberts School. A total of 731 students (16 percent more than the October enrollment) had attended at some time during the 1982-83 school year. Fifteen percent of the total enrollment were students who belonged to an ethnic minority--primarily Southeast Asian. The 2 percent enrollment of black students contrasts sharply with the 28 percent figure for Roberts School and a somewhat higher percentage of blacks at the third school. Twenty-three percent of the students were eligible for federal lunch subsidies, a figure slightly lower than Roberts School. School administrative staff members described students' parents as being

predominantly low-income and semitransient people who had little enthusiasm for school, although a small group of parents were said to be better off financially and more supportive. By several accounts, a number of families served by the school had drug problems. Entering students' achievement test scores in reading and language arts were below district norms and, according to school personnel, still slipping. Achievement scores of sixth graders in math, however, were one point above the district norm.

The third school, referred to as Fort Hudson School, was unusual in several respects. It was housed in two buildings on separate campuses--the sixth grade in one building, the seventh and eighth grades in the other. Two separate K-8 schools incorporated over 15 years earlier into the large urban district had originally occupied the buildings when they were part of a small rural district. A greenhouse, an animal house, woods, and two small ponds reflected the rural past of the two campuses though the larger building serving the upper grades now fronted a busy commercial highway and was surrounded by industrial development. In many ways, however, the school opened to the back, to its rural heritage, rather than to the urban environment now surrounding it.

Fort Hudson had been created as the district's first middle school a few years before the district organized its other middle schools. When the school was incorporated into the district, 10 percent of the students belonged to an ethnic minority. During the 1982-83 school year, 48 percent of the students were minority students, of which three-fourths were black. Thus, Fort Hudson had the largest (37 percent) enrollment of black students of the schools in the study.

As shown in Table 1, the student enrollment at Fort Hudson School was 728 in October, 1982; about 250 in the sixth grade and over 450 in the upper grades. During the school year, a total of 855 students (18 percent more than the October enrollment) appeared on the rolls at one time or another.

This enrollment was the largest of the three schools. The division of Fort Hudson School into two buildings, though, separated the lower grades from upper grades and reduced crowding.

Fort Hudson's students entered the sixth grade with language skills that measured about one standard deviation below the district mean (very similar to Lake School), and they left the eighth grade in about the same relative standing. About a third of the Fort Hudson students were eligible for federal lunch subsidies, a slightly higher proportion than at the other two schools. The high proportion of welfare and ADC families made the school eligible for Chapter I supplementary funds. Neither Roberts nor Lake School were eligible for this support.

Because of the school's peripheral location in the district, 95 percent of Fort Hudson's students were bused. Moreover, there were several indications that the school was somewhat cut off from the neighborhoods in which many students lived. The administrative staff members' depiction of the socioeconomic characteristics of the student population centered on those students, especially minority students, who came from "tough" situations. While Lake School's students had problems at home with transiency, apathy, and pot smoking, the most difficult clientele of Fort Hudson School were said to involve serious social pathologies and trouble with the law. Some students were without homes, some were runaways, and some had one or both parents in prison. These were the extremes, but they added a tone of danger to the picture of the school's environment. Aside from personal problems created by this environment, the staff saw some of the neighborhoods served by the school as sites of chronic conflict and violence, which spilled over into the school. They reported incidents of verbal abuse, intimidation, and extortion stemming from that environment.

Of all three schools, entering Roberts School students were scoring a little higher on the district-wide academic tests than were Lake or Fort

Hudson students and the immediate environment of Roberts School appeared more affluent than that of the other two schools. In terms of ethnic compositions, however, Roberts' 28 percent black students was much nearer the 37 percent figure for Fort Hudson than the two percent for Lake School. Nearly all of Lake School's minority students were Southeast Asian in origin. Whereas the other two schools served more of the district's black population, Lake School dealt with what was recognized as a difficult, low-income white population. This school also exhibited a considerable concern with absenteeism. Fort Hudson School, on the other hand, was known to have the highest suspension rate in the district. These differences aside, all three schools enrolled large numbers of students from low-income families.

The characteristics of the administrative staff at the three schools differed somewhat. Al three school principals were male, but whereas Fort Hudson and Roberts School each had senior principals, the younger Lake School principal was in mid-career. The Roberts and Lake School principals were alike however, in both having started new middle schools five or so years earlier; in contrast, Fort Hudson's principal had overseen the gradual incorporation and evolution of his school over a twenty-year period. Although the structure of positions in their administrative staffs (determined by district level organizational charts) was quite similar--including an administrative assistant, a curriculum specialist, a counselor, and the aforementioned student management specialist--there were substantial differences among the three schools in the responsibilities delegated to these persons and in the teaching staffs' role in managing discipline. These differences are elaborated in the following section.

Teacher experience (years of teaching) was roughly the same at these three schools, with approximately only one-fourth of the teachers at any school having taught for five years or less. At the other end of the continuum, Roberts School did have fewer teachers with over ten years

experience (45 percent as contrasted with 66 and 62 percent at Lake and Fort Hudson), but all of this difference is accounted for in the 6 to 10 year interval. Differences in teachers' longevity at their schools were more pronounced. The Fort Hudson faculty had the fewest teachers new to the school and the greatest staff stability. Nearly half of the teachers at Fort Hudson School had been there more than five years, while less than a fourth of the teachers at the other two schools had been there that long.

Both the Roberts and the Lake School faculties had come from tributary K-8 schools or were new recruits, and both schools had experienced a similar volume of teacher turnover in the past two years. However, our interview data revealed an important difference in the faculties. At Roberts School, apparently, many of the faculty had been initially selected (or retained) for their support of the principal's policy preferences. At Lake School, on the other hand, it appeared that some of the initial faculty had, with some persistence, resisted their principal's preferences; possibly their stronger collective bargaining presence at the school contributed to this resistance. This difference between Roberts and Lake teachers will be discussed further in an examination of teacher satisfaction with policy and policy effectiveness.

## C. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND POLICY

Our initial contact at each school was the principal, whom we interviewed at length about the rules governing student behavior in his school and the procedures for enforcing or revising those rules. At this time, we also obtained official documentation of the school's discipline policy and a description of the disciplinary responsibilities of various administrative support staff. We inquired into how these documents had been developed and adopted; we also learned about the division of labor among the school's administrative staff. Each principal was asked about his school's current concerns regarding discipline problems and about steps being taken to deal with them. During the interview with the principal and subsequent interviews with administrative support staff, we ascertained how records of student absenteeism and misbehavior were kept. We later examined those records to develop summary descriptions of each school's student body. Interviews were repeated during the project period to gain additional school management information and to clear up areas of confusion.

### Roberts School

#### 1. Administrative Organization

Principal. During our interview, the Roberts School principal espoused a discipline philosophy that seemed consonant with the district theme of counseling. However, he took a strategic approach to interaction with students in trouble. His methods for uncovering the truth and bringing miscreants to account were derived from his past experience with interrogation techniques. He used a tape recorder to confront students with discrepancies between their own and others' versions of incidents, stating that students would improve if forced to deal with their problems.

The principal asserted several times that all of his management staff

viewed school discipline in the same light that he did. In fact, he told us several times, in a friendly way, that we were wasting our time talking to other staff members. This view seemed to stem less from an autocratic stance towards his staff and teachers (although it was clear that he had a keen sense of his prerogatives as principal) than from his sense that through selection of personnel and frequency of communication, consensus had been attained. In general, his staff saw him as having an open and positive style in dealing with people. His only remark about dismissing a teacher involved someone who had been using physical punishment on students.

The principal reported that some of his teachers wanted stricter discipline than he preferred. He remarked that the teachers would like a time-out room, but he saw that as an easy escape for the teacher who doesn't want to deal with troublesome kids. The principal didn't see the likelihood of changing the attitudes of teachers, however, which contrasted with his belief in the malleability of students.

Administrative Staff. His administrative staff consisted of a curriculum specialist who was also the administrative assistant, a counselor, and the student management specialist. Students were allowed to see any of the four administrative staff members to work out problems such as a brewing fight. All staff members' offices had windows opening onto the main office space, which was orderly and spacious. There were no extra administrative personnel for low-income and ethnic-minority students; instead of a district-funded social worker visited once a week. The school had learning centers for students with problems.

According to district policy, a school's administrative assistant officially took the principal's place when the principal was absent from the school. In Roberts School, however, the administrative assistant was not usually involved in handling disciplinary cases, which were the jurisdiction of the student management specialist. However, the administrative assistant

did consult with teachers regarding instructional strategies that might alleviate or prevent disruptive behavior by students in the classroom. This consultation seemed to be triggered most often by students who were having problems with teachers and who had seen the counselor. Often the diagnosis would be that the student's placement was wrong and the student would be transferred to another teacher, but sometimes the assistant would talk to the current teacher about resolving the problem. In response to questions about discipline philosophy, the assistant referred us to the principal or the student management specialist for information.

The counselor described her function in terms of developing students' ability to apply problem-solving skills to their difficulties with school, teachers, and other students. She identified this strategy with the principal's philosophy. The goal was to get kids to behave in school, so, to this end, staff members were encouraged to spend extra time with kids in trouble in order to build trusting relationships. The counselor was interested in preventive approaches and had participated in past training sessions for teachers in "positive alternatives to school suspension." She saw her energy consumed, however, by the number of students whom she was supposed to serve and by the press of emergencies.

Student Management Specialist. The student management specialist saw himself as designated by the principal to manage discipline. He took an active role in processing suspensions, which were rare. He articulated his discipline philosophy in terms similar to the principal's--that students who got into trouble needed, nonetheless, to remain in school and to realize that they would someday have to be responsible for their actions. Within this general strategy of keeping kids in school, the specialist took a firm line. He demanded respect from students and would tolerate inappropriate behavior. His response to student complaints in the hall was "'No' is a complete sentence." When a student got into trouble, however, he demonstrated his

care for the student by spending the time necessary to convince the student that change was needed. Although he was a disciplinarian, he would take students out for a hamburger to show that he was human, too. The specialist involved the parents informally and challenged them to cooperate in helping their child rather than taking a defensive stance towards the school.

The specialist saw his job as a difficult one requiring a lot of imagination. To accomplish this he maintained a close, cooperative working relationship with the principal. The specialist also expressed great enthusiasm for his work and active concern for students.

Faculty. With respect to teachers, the specialist thought that each teacher needed a discipline strategy that he was compatible with that teacher's personal style. He often acted as mediator in teacher-student disputes but emphasized that he was "not an administrator"; he was there to help, not to evaluate.

Although the specialist's statement of objectives on file with the district was terse and emphasized routine consultation and handling of referrals rather than special activities, he reported having implemented various preventive strategies in the school in accordance with district policy. One special feature was the school's "pride buttons," which were given to "promote positive student behavior." Other school staff members attested to the effectiveness of these symbolic rewards. The specialist conducted 8-week "school survival courses" for students with chronic behavior problems. He also provided temporary custody for unruly students, although the school did not have a time-out room, as such. Nor did the school have an official after-school detention room, although the specialist did keep students after school as he deemed appropriate.

Other duties of the student management specialist included supervision of bus loading and unloading--apparently a locus of student behavior problems--and a work-service program in which students violating

rules were required to do odd jobs around the school grounds or in the community.

The Roberts School faculty consisted of 34 full-time teachers who were banded loosely in curriculum-based teams, each with a team leader appointed by the principal to convene team meetings and to participate in the school's management team. Team leaders did not have released time for this function but were given extended-responsibility pay for their work. In interviews,[1] teachers spoke of no standing committees or parent groups actively involved in discipline. The principal reported, however, that he and the student management specialist met monthly with a citizen's advisory group regarding discipline matters.

The interviewed teachers responded in highly personal terms to questions about their philosophy of discipline. No teacher referred to or quoted either the district's discipline policy or the school's discipline plan in relation to his or her philosophy, although later questioning revealed familiarity with both. The consensus was that teachers in the school shared a common philosophy that was consonant with the views of school administrators. Their philosophy was plainly "student-centered," although no one used those words to describe it. Discipline was to serve the educational program but was grounded in the beliefs that "students need to feel valued" and that administrators need both to relate well to kids and to "command and receive respect from them." Interviewed teachers characterized the division of responsibility among the administrative staff thus: the student management specialist focused on changing behavior; the counselor focused on explaining the causes of misbehavior; and the principal focused on relating well to students individually.

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[1] As described below, approximately a fifth of the teachers in each school were individually interviewed after completing their questionnaire.

2. Policy Content

All three schools complied with the district requirements that they prepare and distribute statements of their policies on student discipline to parents and students. These statements, sometimes elaborated in a handbook, in effect, defined a zone of discretion for teachers in handling certain types of misbehavior before the student was removed from the classroom or otherwise referred to the office for more formal procedures.

The policy at Roberts School required that referrals be accompanied by exact reports of offending behavior. The teacher was encouraged to involve parents in classroom-level disciplinary action. A chart in the student handbook described the school's graduated severity of reaction to misbheavior in five steps. Certain infractions fell initially within the teacher zone of discretion and involved responses in steps 1 and 2: willful disobedience, disruptive conduct, vulgarity/profanity, violation of classroom rules or school rules, and irregular attendance. A second set of infractions involved immediate office response (step 3), usually by the student management specialist. These infractions included cutting class, leaving school grounds (without permission), insubordination, vandalism, fighting, and use or possession of tobacco. A third set of infractions required the principal's involvement at once (Steps 4 and 5). This class included what are commonly regarded as crimes: stealing; gambling; extortion/coercion: use, sale, distribution, or possession of alcohol or narcotics; possession of a dangerous weapon; and assault.

For infractions of the first set, there were provisions for variations depending on classroom and family circumstances. The teacher was to post and enforce specific classroom rules, although classroom visits and talks with teachers indicated wide variation here. The written policy seemed to be that attendance should not be a problem for the school to solve until

the teacher or the student management specialist (who identified certain students as chronic, serious problems in attendance and other areas) deemed it necessary. According to the principal, however, in practice "teachers do not call the parent about absence." An office aide who collected absentee reports and class cut slips called parents on the first day a student was absent. The aide called again if a reason for the absence had not been obtained or if truancy was suspected. When a student returned after an absence without an excuse, he or she was sent to the student management specialist.

Step 3 in the disciplinary procedures made a case eligible for formal action but left discretion to the student management specialist. In Roberts School the policy was that formal action, especially of a punitive nature, was to be used only as a last recourse. Hence, the student managemert specialist and teacher dealt directly with the social relationships among students and with the home so that the parent involved early and substantially. Informal (short-term) suspensions were given by the student management specialist in lieu of formal action.

It is interesting to note that the initial treatment of absenteeism was less formal than the initial treatment of cutting class or leaving the school grounds; this may have reflected the school's greatest liability in the latter case. Once the student is there, the school is responsible for the student until he or she officially leaves. If the student doesn't show up, it is not the school's problem (barring, of course, a slip between getting on the school bus and entering the school). Another interesting distinction was made between willful disobedience and insubordination. Doing something against directions was treated as potentially remediable within the situation, whereas refusing to accept direction was not so treated. One is reminded of the power that exists so long as it isn't used: once a situation becomes one of direct insubordination, the outcome is potentially destructive

of the teacher's power. Should the student defy the teacher, someone else must be called in.

3. Policy Initiation and Modification

The Roberts teacher teams met once every two weeks, as did the school management team. Faculty meetings were also held "as needed," generally every two weeks; according to the teachers interviewed, however, they tended to be brief and were dominated by the principal. The management team meetings were the official forum for discussing rule changes. As mentioned earlier, the substance of most rules was standard for all schools in this district, most of the variation being in procedures for enforcement and in peripheral matters that might create problems in particular buildings. In Roberts School, recent rule changes appeared limited to minor issues such as wearing hats in school, chewing gum, and having access to certain lavatories.

Getting new rules in place seemed to be somewaht easier than changing or dropping old rules. Almost any person, including students (via the student council), could propose a new rule. Proposals might be presented to faculty teams, the management team, the student management specialist, or the principal. On occasion, the principal issued new rules directly by administrative fiat.

Most rule modifications were discussed in the management team meeting and again in faculty team meetings before being adopted. The procedure could go the other way, too. If teachers were dissatisfied with an existing policy or rule, they would bring up the subject at a team meeting. However, the teachers interviewed had low expectations that a team recommendation would follow. After all, they reasoned, school rules generally emerge in reaction to problems, and so long as the problem remains, the rules is at least a response. "It's easier," said one teacher, "to approach the principal directly with an alternative and argue your case. Many teachers never did,"

the teacher added, because "it's easy for the principal to intimidate people" in direct discussions. No one could recall a rule that had been adopted in recent times.

Lake School

1. Administrative Organization

Principal. The Lake School principal articulated a discipline philosophy that seemed to be strongly in line with the counseling philosophy advocated by the district. He also espoused a "progressive discipline model" in which a student received "logical consequences" for misbehavior. The principal said he tried to deal with each case individually. One problem he noted, however, was the lack of reliable, cumulative data. He complained several times that "you can't run a progressive discipline program if you don't keep data"--he needed to have each student's history immediately available to know how to respond to problems.

On several occasions the principal expressed disapproval of teachers who were punitive and referred students without clearly having tried all the alternatives first. He felt that he had worked hard to "rebuild the atmosphere" in the school and even now had to protect students from teacher arbitrariness. Thus, he defined his personal philosophy as contrary to the philosophy he encountered among teachers when he arrived at the school, which "was predicated on the idea that if you have to work with ...kids [from this neighborhood], you've got to be rough." This difference in discipline philosophies was illustrated in an anecdote the principal told. He recalled a time when his student management specialist had been sick and he had had to "cover." As he reported it, "When word got out [to the teachers], there were virtually no referrals all day."

The principal's discipline philosophy may also have reflected the

assumption implied in his defense of problem students: he attributed some students' troubles in school to the fact that they were "socially beyond this level and stuck here because of age." Some of those students were the ones he would like to spend a lot of time with some day. He distinguished such students, however, from "the stoners," who could stay home as far as he was concerned. He was convinced, based on a survey of student opinion conducted four years earlier, that discipline problems stemmed from students' dissatisfaction with school in general rather than from students not fearing punishment. He thought that the chronic problem student didn't care about punishment, so more punishment wouldn't solve matters. He hoped that making teachers more solicitous of students would make the school a more attractive place and would solve some of the discipline problems.

Administrative Staff. Lake School had an administrative staff similar to that of Roberts School. There was no administrative assistant, however. Because the curriculum specialist was not certified to perform in that capacity, the principal had no one else to fill the role. (This situation was apparently remedied in the 1983-84 school year.) The curriculum specialist seemed uninvolved in the management of student discipline. Consequently, our interview with this staff member was confined primarily to the problems of dealing with occasional student reassignment problems.

The school code defined the counselor's role as intervening "where the student has problems with himself or others." This was similar to the problem-solving theme at Roberts School. Yet our impression from those we interviewed was that this role had not been well performed in the past at the school, even though the previous counselor seemed to have been sympathetic to the principal's discipline philosophy.

The present counselor was new to the school, having transferred to Lake School in midyear. She was conducting preventive programs to deal with

the drug problem, which she perceived as substantial. She also was tightening up the management procedures for attendance, which she regarded as being in disarray. Because so much of her school day was busy with individual student problems, she expressed frustration with the difficulty of dealing with the parents of students in trouble. The counselor was a member of the school management team and also of a discipline committee chaired by the student management specialist.

Student Management Specialist. The student management specialist at Lake School had an office adjacent to the principal's. His role in discipline was defined by written school policy as ancillary, although in practice he seemed to have a central role in discipline. The principal stated that he delegated to the student management specialist the responsibility for receiving disciplinary referrals, which the written code attributed to the "principal or curriculum coordinator" or "principal's designee." The principal stated that he handled only those referrals that the specialist was too busy to take.

The specialist seemed to function as a counselor, although he was not one by profession. He fully espoused the district's counseling philosophy on discipline and expressed strong feelings about employing a wide range of options in dealing with students in trouble. This counseling function grew out of the formal responsibility for intervention described above. It also was necessitated by the frequent conflict among students. As the principal remarked, "He spends a lot of time on the 'Hatfields and McCoys'." The counselor remarked that, whereas the girls sought her out, the boys tended to go to the student management specialist for help.

According to the activities report he submitted to the district at the end of the 1982-83 school year, the student management specialist promoted positive student behavior by giving students recognition for accomplishments, sending positive notes to parents, holding classes once a

week for "peer-rejected" youth, and taking students out for treats. His intervention strategies included supervising a time-out area for in-school suspension (usually for one or two periods a day), counseling, performance contracting, monitoring route slips, conferring with parents, and "staffing" (meeting with other staff members about problems of particular students). He chaired the discipline committee, comprised of the counselor, a district social worker, and the ERC teacher. He consulted with individual teachers, observed classrooms, and ran classroom sessions for teachers. During the 1982-83 school year his workshop presentations for teachers on discipline were held at schools other than Lake. He recorded daily student office referral and prepared monthly summaries. At the time of the study, possibly due to conflict with his principal, he was not participating in management team meetings.

Faculty. The 36 full-time teachers at Lake School were organized into multi-grade-level and cross-subject teams called "houses," each of which had a leader. This organization was consonant with the principal's stated belief in enhancing close relationships between students and teachers and in decentralizing the handling of discipline. The principal saw the house system as an important feature of Lake School, although teachers interviewed varied in their estimates of the effectiveness of the house system. The house leaders and the principal constituted the school's management team. The full faculty met weekly, and various schoolwide committees, including a discipline committee and a guidance committee, also met throughout the year. The project did not collect data on teacher participation in committees and teams.

The interviewed teachers at Lake School expressed their discipline philosophies in terms of the consequences for poor student behavior rather than in terms of assumptions or beliefs about adolescence or education. Receiving special mention was "assertive discipline," which was written into

the school's discipline plan. Assertive discipline commonly alludes to clear and agreed-upon expectations for student behavior, specific consequences for misbehavior, and plans negotiated between teachers and students for changing behavior. Unlike the administrators interviewed, none of the teachers mentioned that the district advocated a counseling approach to discipline. Two teachers saw an inconsistency between the school's stated policy of guidance and the lack of resources--no school-wide guidance program and limited alternative programs in an area where, considering "what kids go through to get to school at all,...it's a miracle."

Further analysis revealed that these interview remarks were couched in the language of the school's discipline plan, which was developed and adopted in 1981-82. Lake School teachers seemed to take great pride in the plan, on which many of them had worked. All interviewees believed that the plan expressed a positive, workable approach to student discipline. One teacher did note, however, that "we got bogged down on the consequences end of things," and another recalled that "our biggest fight was over how to word things positively," which is an essential part of assertive discipline. All concurred that the plan was "a good code, with a good philosophy."

2. Policy Content

The discipline plan for Lake School developed from a list of twenty general school rules, prepared in 1981, into a more complete "discipline code," prepared in 1982, that reorganized Lake School's rules somewhat and specified procedures for enforcing rules and consequences for disobeying rules. These documents clearly recognized the district's counseling philosophy but also elaborated in detail violations of the school's order. In discussing these documents, the principal referred to his school's strong union involvement as contributing to the formal elaboration of rules. The

basic rules, however, were similar to those at the other two schools, except that Lake School's documents put special emphasis on the parents' responsibility for student discipline. The reported lack of parental support may have occasioned that emphasis. One device for increasing the cooperation of parents was the use of a route slip for students who cut class or were chronically tardy. The principal reported that this had improved communication with parents.

The 1982 code contained a detailed section on how school staff members were to respond to student absence. Teachers were to "maintain a daily record of student attendance in their classes [and were] responsible for following up on students whose absence is unexcused or unaccounted for." Teachers were expected to contact the office regarding all known truancies and students absent three consecutive days for reasons unknown. Teachers were then to contact the parent. After six days of absence, a referral was made to the counselor, who might visit the home and institute various corrective procedures. The code went on to state that teachers must provide assignments missed during an absence (including, apparently, unexcused absences) and, so long as the student made up the work within a certain number of days, the student's grade was not to be affected by the absence.

Like the code at Roberts, the Lake School code laid out five steps of increasing seriousness in responding to student discipline problems. Steps 1 and 2 were similar to the corresponding steps at Roberts, although more detail was provided in the Lake code regarding teacher response. In Step 1, the teacher was to isolate the student, discuss the offending behavior, and record some disposition of the event (such as a promise of improvement). In Step 2, the teacher was to contact the parents and involve them in the remedy of the problem. Step 3 involved office intervention, which the code described as a "conference with the principal or designee," a note to the parent, and "one or more of the following:

1) The student will be kept out of the referring teacher's classroom for the remainder of the period or day...

2) The student may be referred to the counselor...

3) The principal and the teacher will meet with the student to develop and implement a behavior correction plan...

4) The student may be sent home for the rest of the day...

5) A staff conference may be held...

6) The student's schedule...may be changed...

7) In-House Suspension [with] the Student Management Specialist..."

Step 3 appeared to be the most critical at Lake School, as will be described below. Step 4 involved minor or major suspension for "crisis behavior...which endangers the safety of others, substantial disruptive behavior,....abusive defiance of staff," and "chronic behavior [where] there are three referrals for the same problem in the span of a four month period." Step 5 was expulsion from school.

Essential to the operation of this system of steps was the classroom-level discipline management plan that all teachers were to develop. The teachers interviewed reported a variety of techniques for handling classroom misbehavior:

conspicuously posted classroom rules
a system of daily warnings for infractions (e.g., lateness)
use of time-out in the hallway, library, or other classroom
conferencing with students outside the classroom
detention after school in the teacher's classroom, possibly involving tutorial
development of student plan for improvement
conference with parent
consultation with house colleagues

3. Policy Initiation and Modification

The Lake School faculty and staff had engaged in a year-long policy initiation a couple of years earlier. The result was the present discipline plan. Since that time, the principal reported, policy modifications had been

minor, such as procedures for removing tardy students from the daily absentee list.

The principal remarked during interviews that he was in regular touch with the discipline committee about problems and frequently discussed problems with the management team, which included the house leaders. Although the principal felt that he could change a rule without consultation, he stated that his style was to consult respected teachers in order to get support. His view of consultation was colored, however, by distrust of some teachers' inclinations to make rules tougher and more punitive.

An interesting case of policy initiation and modification involved the "grounded at school" program that had been operated during 1980-81. This program, designed and operated by the principal, the previous counselor, and a different student management specialist, provided for inschool-suspension and a time-out room that would be assigned for a day or more. The program was discontinued after a half-year period because it was considered too punitive and not worth the effort. According to the principal, the strategy didn't work with the chronic offenders and was overkill for the occasional offender, yet teachers interviewed seemed not to know much about the program or why it had been discontinued. At present, in-school suspension was less formally managed and of shorter duration.

The principal objected to initiating an after-school detention program for similar reasons, although he and the present student management specialist had volunteered to operate one on a cooperative basis with participating teachers. He would not pay a teacher to supervise detention. The principal reported that he had also considered a Saturday school for truants but found that it ran afoul of district contract and financial constraints.

The formal procedures for policy development were uniformly understood by the teachers interviewed. Individuals might propose changes either

through their "house" or committee structures. "House" recommendations would be presented to the management team for discussion, followed by review at a faculty meeting and then a decision by the principal. This route might take three or four weeks. Recommendations from the discipline or guidance committee would go directly to the principal for decision. These committees apparently met infrequently and erratically, however. The open meeting convened by the principal to consider the overall plan apparently never resulted in changes, according to the interviewees.

Those teachers interviewed perceived a lack of formal discussion of policy issues among the administrative staff. Since the student management specialist did not participate in the management team, discussion of discipline problems in that team was at least partially separated from implementation.

Fort Hudson School

1. Administrative Organization

Principal. The Fort Hudson School principal viewed his school as an environment that compensated for the deficiences of urban childhood. An advocate of strong personal relationships between individual staff members and students, he modeled such friendliness in his own encounters with students in the corridors. The principal felt that many of the school's students lacked constructive relationships with adults, so he tried to provide such relationships in school by hiring the kind of faculty (particularly young male teachers) who would enjoy engaging in real-life, outdoor activities with the students.

The principal's discipline philosophy was strict. Students were to comply with school rules or suffer the consequences; anyone who posed a threat to others' safety would be removed from the campus. The principal reported several anecdotes in which students were referred to the school from

juvenile homes, and he seemed proud of the school's ability to turn some of them around. However, his attitude was that not all students would reform because school could do only so much and that it was unrealistic to expect otherwise.

Administrative Staff. The organization of Fort Hudson administrative staff was somewhat more complex than the other two schools because of the two campuses and the extra Chapter I money. Both campuses had their own administrative assistants in charge of attendance and discipline. The sixth grade campus was run somewhat autonomously. During the first months of the study, the administrative assistant at the larger building transferred to the sixth grade building as vice principal. He strongly supported his principal's discipline philosophy, describing it as assertive discipline. He felt that school-level discipline programs, notably the after-school detention room, had improved learning conditions in the classrooms. He also felt that students often welcomed a staff member's intervention when a fight was brewing and that such situations required little to defuse them.

The former administrative assistant's replacement in the seventh-eighth grade building was a young black woman--the only nonwhite school administrator in our study. She had taught in the school previously but had worked for the last few years in the district office's desegregation program. She too seemed to support the principal's philosophy, although she described the school policy as "Jim Fay's approach--discipline with dignity" rather than assertive discipline. Unlike the former assistant, she had an administrative certificate and processed suspensions.

This seventh-eighth grade building administrator emphasized the variety of individual circumstances with which she had to deal in judging suspension cases. She viewed the high suspension rate as an indication that the administrative staff were doing their jobs; students "earned" suspensions the same way they earned failing grades. She remarked that "we are not

ignoring things and babysitting students when they really should be removed from the situation." She had also participated in preventive programs at the school, however.

Separate in many ways from the line of authority represented by the administrative assistants were the support personnel: the Chapter I social worker, the curriculum specialist, and the student management specialist. Their offices were at the other end of the building from the main office, where the principal and administrative assistant worked. The support personnel all espoused the district's counseling philosophy and were heavily involved in preventive work and intervention with individual students' problems. Some of them expressed reservations about the formal suspension procedure, but none expressed disagreement or dissatisfaction with the principal or the administrative assistant. The three support personnel seemed to work more interactively, with a more fluid division of labor, than the support personnel at the other two schools. However, this may have been necessitated by the high volume of work in student discipline.

The social worker said that she spent 25 percent of her time monitoring the daily attendance problems and ensuring that part-time student employees regularly called parents of selected absentees. The other 75 percent of her time was spent monitoring the progress of the 250 students eligible for Chapter I services, especially the 28 students she designated as "alerts." This time was spent counseling students and/or teachers and cooperating with the school community agent in contacting parents.

The curriculum specialist seemed to function like the Lake School specialist; her "turf" was the master schedule of classes and special assistance in curriculum and instruction problems. The Fort Hudson curriculum specialist participated somewhat more than her counterpart at Lake, however, in counseling and solving students' academic problems.

Student Management Specialist. The duties of the student management

specialist at Ford Hudson School seemed to conform closely to the district's job description for the position. The student management specialist had diffuse and positive relationships with students (personal for those who were enrolled in his survival courses) and with teachers had little direct participation in formal discipline proceedings. Another support staff person described the specialist as "the students' buddy," someone who might act as advocate for students in disciplinary proceedings but no more often than any other staff person might. Teachers interviewed seemed to value the specialist.

The specialist's program on file with the district included co-directing leadership/conflict resolution workshops and followup sessions, training teachers in various humanistic activities to improve the school climate, managing a token reinforcement system at the school level for positive behavior, and teaching behavior improvement (which appeared to use transactional analysis as an underlying framework) in "school survival" classes and other groups for students receiving many detentions or suspensions. The workshop on leadership and conflict resolution, which the student management specialist coordinated, was a major effort by the district and the school to reduce the incidence of fighting, the main cause of suspensions. It was the major example encountered of a preventive discipline program.

The fluidity in the roles assigned to the different administrators was expressed by one of them thus: most of the students who come to one person's attention were likely to come to the attention of the others as well. Who of the support staff would work with a student was informally decided on the basis of fluctuations in workload and the circumstances of the case. Staff members interviewed felt that this working arrangement helped in an organization with unpredictable problems where a more rigid division of labor might result in partial treatment of problems and unequal work loads.

Those teachers interviewed saw both the social worker and the student management specialist as counselors rather than disciplinarians. They were active with teacher team leaders in an informal management team that sponsored frequent discussion of issues and problems among staff.

Faculty. The organizational structure of teacher positions appeared to be important at Fort Hudson School. The teaching staff included 46 full-time classroom positions, but the split campus meant that each teacher worked in a building smaller than those at either of the other two schools in the study. Also, teachers stayed with the same homeroom class throughout seventh and eighth grades. The faculty at the larger campus was divided into four grade-level teams consisting of a team leader appointed by the principal and four teachers representing each of the major curricular areas. There was also a team of special-subject teachers. These teams, more than those at the other two schools, seemed to function as organizational units. (The sixth grade faculty functioned as a unit in their building.) The team leaders were paid for their duties, and the relatively late starting time (9:30) allowed teams to meet in the morning before classes.

The teams were the primary locus of discipline policy-making and enforcement, according to all accounts. Two of the teams at the larger campus followed a modified form of assertive discipline, with clearly agreed-upon expectations for student behavior and consequences for misbehavior; those teams, however, omitted the plan negotiated between teacher and student for changing misbehavior that is usually part of an assertive discipline program. Two other teams used a behavioral approach with a system of sequenced reminders and intermediate consequences. The remaining team used no specific approach and rarely issued discipline referrals. Thus, there was some heterogeneity of teacher philosophy at the team level.

At the same time, however, it should be stressed that there was

considerable unanimity among Fort Hudson teachers. It appeared extremely important to these teachers to set standards, to make consequences known, to expect students to take responsibility for their own behavior and its consequences, and to follow through with consistent enforcement. For example, one of the interviewed teachers defended retaining for a second time a student who had been absent "about 60 percent of the time": "I doubt it will affect [the student] much one way or the other, but we need a line so the other kids can see." This philosophy seemed to have evolved slowly over time and now represented the prevailing view of the faculty. Teachers saw this philosophy as supporting both the instructional program and the students' need for structure. One teacher stated that "the primary reason for the rules is to make me able to teach. I need a reasonable noise level and order to teach well." One person on the administrative staff said that teachers viewed discipline primarily as supporting their instructional efforts and only secondarily as oriented to changing behavior.

2. Policy Content

The discipline code at Fort Hudson School was represented by the "student conduct code" section of the student handbook, a formal statement of discipline procedures with a special form for teachers, and a statement of policy on tardiness. The student conduct code strongly emphasized that misbehavior interfered with, disrupted, and detracted from school activities, and it affirmed the school's intention to "eliminate...by suspension or expulsion" students "who will not respect the rights of others." In effect, as will be seen, this made suspension a nearly-automatic penalty for fighting. The handbook had a brief section on attendance, but in general this did not seem to be a major area of concern at Fort Hudson.

Attendance procedures were somewhat different from those at the other two schools in that the administrative staff had delegated the monitoring of

class cutting to teachers. The school had organized a team of student trainees who called parents of absent students each morning. The school also provided official forms regarding consequences for infractions that students were required to sign and take home for parent signature. The physical isolation of the school left students few places to go when cutting class. An added problem (for the would-be truant) was that the most frequently used "escape route" was through the playground behind the school, which was easily visible from many classrooms. It appeared to be fairly routine for the student management specialist to chase down students who had gone there to smoke or talk and return them to school. In general, building absences appeared to be fairly closely monitored by Fort Hudson administrative personnel. The common penalty for both building absences and class cutting was one to three periods of after-school detention.

With respect to tardiness, a formal policy empowered the teacher to impose a variety of penalties including lowering the day's academic grade for multiple unexcused tardies. Repeated tardies typically led to after-school detention. Tardy policies were developed by teams. Because nearly all students were bused, morning tardies were low; students who missed the bus simply stayed home from school.

In response to other student misbehavior, the school made the conventional distinction between major and minor violations--the latter left largely to the individual teacher and/or team to manage. Most of the teams had developed highly specific codes for student behavior. Infractions typically resulted in one or more after-school detentions.

Fort Hudson used an after-school detention room that had been formalized as part of policy two years earlier. Teachers could assign students to detention not only for absenteeism and other infractions listed in district policy but also for "status offenses," or errors of omission with respect to the student role, such as not completing work. Strict rules

governed the detention period--no talking, no moving about, no gum or candy--during which students were required to do homework or makeup work. Detention was increased if the student skipped or failed to return the detention form with a parent's signature. Teachers were paid to supervise detention. Team leaders and the administrative assistant managed the bookkeeping and provided backup support.

3. Policy Initiation and Modification

New or revised rules could be initiated at Fort Hudson School in a variety of ways. Classroom rules were, of course, within the purview of the individual teacher, so long as they were consistent with team priorities and were not contrary to school rules. The relative strength of the intermediate level of the organization--the team--to modify discipline policy may have been a real asset, although it seemed to leave the process of modifying school policy somewhat ambiguous, as will be explained.

Teachers could introduce suggestions for school rules at team meetings or faculty meetings. Generally proposed rules were widely discussed by interested parents and students as well as by teachers and administrators, although one teacher commented that "the more serious the rule under discussion, the fewer people there are involved in the decision." Team leaders acted as a committee that wrote proposed changes to existing rules, but such proposals required the principal's approval. Only on rare occasions did the Fort Hudson principal mandate a rule without broad discussion.

In general, the rule-making process was described as very fluid--"the rules tend to change to meet new situations." This fluidity was a pervasive characteristic of role relationships among Fort Hudson School staff. It was illustrated in a staff member's description of how a former procedure for reporting student cuts had gradually withered away because of the burden of time it required and its lack of useful data. Eventually, the staff

introduced a new system that emphasized notifying parents and formalizing student acknowledgement of responsibilities for absenteeism and its consequences.

## D. STUDENT DISCIPLINE REFERRALS AND TEACHER/STUDENT SURVEYS

### 1. Student Discipline Referrals

Concurrently with interviewing administrative staff, we began to compile school-level records of discipline infractions and penalties. In this report, we subsume these recorded events under the rubric "student referrals," although the terminology and the format of the records differed from school to school, as described below. Compiling records of referrals and consequent penalties became a lengthy process that was to last through most of the following summer because the schools seemed not to keep summary records beyond what was required by law and district regulations. Some records, such as those of tardies and teacher-monitored detentions, were kept only in teachers' grade books. These were not examined.

At Roberts School, we found 668 student "referrals" and "incident reports" filed by student name. Each form listed the date of the referral, information about the person filing the referral (teacher or other), the nature of the offense, and the disposition of the referral. However, in over 400 cases, the disposition reference was missing, which may mean that the discipline referral resulted in nothing beyond an informal talk with the student. Our impression was that many cases of rule infractions came to the attention of office personnel via less formal communications; the office personnel decided which of those communications to formalize and add to the referral file.

At Lake School, student referrals were recorded on daily logs, which also included references to students' requests for assistance and to school personnel's phone calls to, or meetings with, parents and other persons in following up on earlier referrals. These additional references were deleted from our analysis. In Lake School, disposition was more conscientiously noted than at Roberts School. We found 1314 discipline referral

entries--only .46 of these lacking reference to disposition. However, students involved were not always listed by their full names, so confusion was possible among students with the same last name and first initial, such as brothers and sisters. Those entries whose identification was uncertain were recorded as "unknown" entries.

Fort Hudson School appeared to have the most complete records of referrals, noted on "discipline forms" filed alphabetically by student. We counted 2999 referrals. For each referral, we recorded the date, person filing the referral, nature of the offense, and disposition. Though all but 103 of these referrals included a reference to disposition, the listing of suspensions and expulsions on these forms was far from complete. When we checked these school records against the district's records of suspension and expulsion, we found a major discrepancy between the nearly 200 such formal actions listed on the district's records and the 14 appearing on the school's listing of dispositions of referrals. It appeared either that most incidents resulting in a letter of suspension or expulsion were not written up as referrals or that suspension or expulsion was imposed subsequent to the administrative action listed on the referral. (Apparently this practice was also followed at Lake School, where the school's daily log referred to only 23 suspensions, less than half of the 49 recorded by the district.)

For each school, the student referral data were tallied to obtain the following descriptive data:

a) number of students receiving differing numbers of referrals;
b) number of student referrals reported by each faculty member;
c) number of referrals received by suspended students;
d) frequency of different administrative responses to rule infractions;
e) frequency of different rule infractions resulting in referrals;
f) frequency of different rule infractions resulting in suspensions

In effect, these student referral summaries provide a description of the operation and "outcomes" of each school's disciplinary policy. The characteristics of the subjects of disciplinary action, those students who have broken and may continue to break school rules, are also included in this description. Information on these students was obtained from school records and district computer printouts of end-of-term grade reports. In addition to the basic descriptors of sex, ethnicity and grade level, these records provided information regarding each student's grade point average (GPA) for the current school year. These data were cross-referenced with data on the frequency of student referrals and suspensions to develop more complete descriptions of students receiving various numbers of behavior referrals. In addition, since district records were available on GPAs for the total student population at each school, comparisons of academic performance between students receiving either disciplinary referrals or suspensions and students receiving neither were also possible.

2. Teacher Questionnaires

To obtain information on teachers' perceptions of each school's discipline policy and its effectiveness, a two-page teacher questionnaire, reviewed by the school's principal, was distributed to all classroom teachers listed as current full-time faculty. This questionnaire is included as Appendix I. It was accompanied by a letter of explanation with a request for a followup interview and a stamped envelope for direct return mailing to the project office. Anonymity of respondents was maintained in recording all data except the agreement to participate in an interview. Of the 116

questionnaire packets distributed in the three schools, 92 were returned--29 of the 34 distributed at Roberts School, 29 of the 36 distributed at Lake School and 34 of the 46 distributed at Fort Hudson School--for an overall response rate of 79 percent. Ten of the 24 nonresponding teachers were special subject teachers (e.g. music, P.E.); three others were on school leave at the time the questionnaire was distributed, and two teachers returned only the first page of their questionnaires.

The first page of the questionnaire contained 16 multiple choice questions. The questions principally asked teachers whether there was staff support for current school policy, how well their school's rules were working, whether disciplinary problems were decreasing or not, and how much of the respondent's time was involved in managing student discipline. Three questions concerned teachers' interaction with students in rule development and enforcement. Two final questions asked about the respondents' years of teaching experience and tenure at their school.

The second page of the questionnaire was a checklist of ten comments referring to six different school rules for student behavior. Teachers were asked to indicate whether they regarded a particular comment as appropriate for different rules. The comments dealt with policy initiation, enforcement, and acceptance. The rules were chosen on the basis of interviews with administrators and inspection of documents to assure that they were common to the three schools. They covered student misbehaviors ranging in seriousness from the use of radios to fighting. These six rules were described on the questionnaire as

Rule A: Students are not allowed to bring radios or tape recorders to school except with special permission.

Rule B: Students absent from class who are not on the daily absentee list shall be reported for disciplinary action.

Rule C: Students late to their class more than once shall be reported for disciplinary action.

Rule D: Students shall be sent from class for disciplinary action for physical abuse of other children.

Rule E: Students repeatedly disrupting classroom instruction shall be reported for disciplinary action.

Rule F: Students who defy a teacher are subject to disciplinary action.

After the teachers had completed the questionnaire, brief interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes were conducted with those teachers in each school who had indicated on their returned questionnaires their willingness to be interviewed. In all, six of Roberts' teachers, seven of Lake's teachers, and eight of Fort Hudson's teachers participated in interviews. An interview guide was used that allowed us to refer back to the teacher questionnaire items and request some expansion of the teacher's response. In particular, the interviews encouraged discussion of each school's discipline philosophy, its procedures for initiating or changing these policies, and the effectiveness of its present policies and rules.

3. Student Questionnaires

Data on student opinion was obtained using a brief, 15-question, one-page questionnaire distributed to all students just prior to their spring break. The fifteen questions reference different research variables, four dealing with rule enforcement and four with policy acceptance. In addition, two sets of questions asked for students' reports of their having received after-school detention and having been sent from class--how often and for what reason(s). Finally, students were asked, "Is there any rule your school should have which it doesn't have now?" A copy of this questionnaire is

included as Appendix 2. These questionnaires were completed privately and anonymously (except for a detachable interview volunteer form) in each student's homeroom class and then returned in sealed envelopes to the teacher for collection by a member of the research team.

A total of 1543 completed student questionnaires were returned--538 from 27 classes at Roberts School, 453 from 20 classes at Lake School, and 552 from 24 classes at Fort Hudson School. Estimating a moderate ten-percent rate of absence from class, these returns suggest a response rate of above 85 percent.

Though several hundred students indicated they wished to be interviewed, project plans (and resources) provided for only ten student interviews at each school. Last-minute unavailability of students to be interviewed and other scheduling problems resulted in a total of 21 completed student interviews--7 at Roberts School, 10 at Fort Hudson School, and only 4 at Lake School. All interviews were completed within the scheduled half hour, and many were shorter. Essentially, the interviews probed for examples of discipline enforcement, students' understanding of reasons behind school rules, and their opinions on how well these rules were working.

## E. FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR DIFFERENCES AMONG SCHOOLS IN STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICIES

In this section we will compare our data from the three middle schools to suggest responses to the first research question: What factors account for differences among schools in student discipline policy, i.e., in policy content, in policy initiation and modification, and in policy enforcement?

Before we present comparative analyses of the data, it is important to remind the reader of our sampling limitations. The three schools in our study were in no sense a representative sample even of the population of middle schools in their own district. First, they were nominated by district administrators for inclusion because they fit the project's general selection criteria of "schools confronted by serious problems and schools that varied in the types of policy developed to deal with these problems." This, in itself, introduces differences with other district schools. Second, we were able to include only schools that were willing to allow project personnel to probe into sensitive areas of school life through access to student discipline records, to questionnaires, and extended interviews with staff members about potentially controversial aspects of school administration. Schools that agreed to participate may or may not be like those that did not.

It is also important to avoid inferring, on the basis of comparison among our three schools, that an effective policy in one school would necessarily be effective in another school. It simply cannot be concluded that any one school's policy would work as well in another school with a different principal and administrative staff, a different group of teachers, and a different population of students and parents to serve.

A further limitation on our ability to draw conclusions is our study's lack of the data necessary to assess the impact of a policy change in

any of the schools over a long period of time. Our data is a cross-section of a continuous flow of policy development and implementation in three school settings in a changing environment.

Let us consider the differences in policy content, policy initiation and modification, and policy enforcement among the three schools: What was the variation in how rules were written and interpreted, in how policies were developed, and in how they were implemented? After establishing the variation in these components of policy, we can examine associations between the components themselves as well as between them and other school or personnel characteristics that might account for such variation. Our interest is in accounting for the differences we found in the interrelationships of components and in the characteristics we noted among schools and personnel.

## Differences in Policy Content

The basic content of rules regarding prescriptions and proscriptions for student behavior was quite similar in all three schools. As described earlier, these rules were developed in the common context of state law, district regulations, and the institutional traditions of American public schools. None of these schools attempted to relax such rules along the lines of the open-school movement. Nor was any school single-minded in its attempt to realize one particular ethos. The schools did differ in their specific procedures for monitoring student behavior (e.g., reporting absenteeism), allocating responsibilities for responding to infractions, and imposing sanctions. They also differed in the elaboration of preventive procedures--e.g., training students to avoid or contain conflict and developing lists of students to be monitored as potential problems.

Fort Hudson School had the most elaborate and severe set of rules.

It was the only school of the three to impose after-school detention, and it was the only school to use virtually "automatic" sanctions. Its written policy was unique in its stated intention to remove students from school if they interfered with the rights of others; the other two schools officially interposed several layers of adjudication before such a step would be taken. Fort Hudson also employed the largest number of gradations of suspension. In addition to major and minor suspensions (as defined by district regulations), Fort Hudson used "informal suspension" and sending the student home for the rest of the day "in lieu of suspension." The latter, furthermore, was an option for team leaders as well as school administrators.

Both Lake and Roberts had different ways of responding to misbehavior. Lake School was alone in using an "in-school suspension" procedure, although its implementation seemed to have diminished since it had been formulated. Another unique aspect of Lake School's policy was the rule that students were to be provided with makeup work for all absences--not, apparently, for excused absences alone. These two policies reflected a general administrative commitment to rehabilitation of misbehaving students rather than punishment, as at Fort Hudson. While the Roberts School staff articulated an approach similar to Lake School's, there were no unique rules distinguishing their strategy. Both Lake and Roberts Schools elaborated more procedural steps for responding to misbehavior than did Fort Hudson School, where team discretion seemed to be more important.

While emphasis in the written policies of Fort Hudson and Lake Schools was on protection of the school from unruly students, there were also corrective themes at both schools. The Lake School policy provided for intervention with and rehabilitation of unruly students by the student management specialist, who might use in-school suspension as an occasion for working intensively with a student. Policy as articulated by the principal

at Lake, however, down-played in-school suspension as being too punitive and instead provided for more flexible responses to student misbehavior in individual cases as determined by the specialist or by the principal.

Although there was no written policy on student correction at Fort Hudson, the school had committed itself to a special program, funded by the district, that articulated a concern with prevention of misbehavior such as fighting, if not correction. Moreover, the Fort Hudson principal articulated a broader preventive policy of hiring teachers who would spend time building good personal relationships with students and to compensate for some of the problems students brought to school with them.

At Roberts, the corrective theme had been incorporated into the wording of written policy, but this theme seemed to be articulated by the principal and administrative staff as "expectations" for, rather than "restrictions" on, behavior. Even penalties had positive expectations attached to them--students were given work to do around the school rather than suspended.

Differences in Policy Initiation and Modification

The process of creating new rules and modifying old ones differed among the three schools. One of the teacher questionnaire items related to involvement in developing various school rules.

Table 2 presents summarizations of teacher responses to this item for the three schools.

Table 2

Teacher Participation in Rule Development in Three Middle Schools
(Percent of Teachers Reporting Participation Regarding Six School Rules)

| Item | Rule | Roberts | Lake | Fort Hudson |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rules that I participated in developing: | no radios or tape recorders | 10 | 15 | 29 |
| | class cuts | 7 | 4 | 21 |
| | report for: class tardies | 7 | 7 | 26 |
| | report for: physical abuse | 10 | 19 | 24 |
| | report for: class disruption | 7 | 15 | 24 |
| | report for: defying teacher | 7 | 11 | 29 |

*Percentages based on 29 respondents at Roberts, 27-29 at Lake, and 34 at Fort Hudson

Fort Hudson School had the most elaborate, decentralized, active system of policy development. As is evident from Table 2, Fort Hudson teachers reported considerably higher levels of participation in developing each of the six rules listed on the questionnaire checklist than did teachers in the other two schools. Individual teachers developed classroom rules within a common approach decided on by a team, which met weekly and deliberated actively on discipline problems. By several reports, the process of creating the after-school detention program had been satisfactory, and the administrative staff seemed to have flexibility in modifying the procedures for monitoring class cuts and contacting parents about students with disciplinary problems. Lake School had a system of policy development similar on paper to Fort Hudson's, but the team system did not seem to function nearly as actively in policy development as Fort Hudson's. Our questionnaire and interview records indicated that some Lake teachers perceived a disparity between the principal's avowed desire to involve teachers in decision-making and the his practice of exerting control in applying school discipline policy to individual cases. One example provided

by the principal was his recent vetoing of proposed rule modifications that seemed arbitrary or punitive to him. In a more general statement, he said that he required schoolwide adoption by the faculty before he would enforce a rule. The school's elaborate list of rules, however, had been developed by the faculty two years previous.

Roberts School had an open process of policy deliberation that provided little discretion at the team level. Policy relied more on consensual expectations, articulated by the principal and discussed in several forums, than on codified rules. Change even on minor matters, though sometimes initiated by teachers, was developed and promoted primarily by the principal. None of the teachers interviewed recalled having developed a school rule recently. Twenty-five of the 29 responding Roberts teachers indicated no participation in developing any of the six school rules listed on the checklist. The two or three Roberts teachers who had responded affirmatively to the rule participation question were possibly referring to an earlier year of rule development.

Was there an association between school policy content and policy initiation? Based on our data it seems plausible to say that the more teachers are involved in the initiation process, the more elaborate the policy will be. The most elaborate code was at Fort Hudson, where the teachers were most involved at the team level, although Lake's code was nearly as elaborate and had also been developed with strong faculty input. In addition, Fort Hudson had the most protective policy, although Lake <u>on paper</u> was nearly as protective. Hence, we would also suggest that the more teachers are involved in policy development, the stronger the protective emphasis in policy will be.

Differences in Administrators' Enforcement of Policy

Although our initial formulation of the research problem treated enforcement as a single concept, our examination of administrative and faculty responses to student misbehavior in the three schools lead us to differentiate the enforcement actions of the principal and other administrative staff members from enforcement actions of the teachers. The relationship between these two enforcement groups becomes interesting in itself.

In describing administrative enforcement, we identified differences in general strictness, in the role of the student management specialist, and in the implementation of programs to prevent and correct student misbehavior. We examined interviews with administrators and teachers and the records on source and disposition of student referrals to characterize administrative strictness. Fort Hudson personnel were strict in applying rules to cases of infraction, while Roberts and Lake personnel were more flexible. This flexibility appeared to be more consistent with written policy at Roberts School, whereas at Lake School there seemed to us to be a tension between the letter of the elaborate code developed by teachers and the flexibility practiced by administrators.

As described earlier, we examined the records of student infractions and penalties in each school. These records of referrals identified the person filing the referral, the nature of the offense, and the disposition of the referral. To examine an administrator's enforcement of policy, we summarized various administrative responses to disciplinary referrals. Table 3 shows the relative frequency of these responses to student referrals at each school. The table also includes the total number of student referrals,[1] the number of these referrals made by administrators, the

[1]The large differences in numbers of student referrals is discussed in the subsequent section.

number of referrals on which action was listed in school records, and the number of suspensions and expulsions at each school.

Table 3

Administrative Response to Student Rule Infractions in Three Middle Schools (Percent of Various Actions Listed on Disciplinary Referral Records*)

| Type of Action | Roberts | Lake | Fort Hudson |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student conference | 11 | 36 | 2 |
| Student held out of class | 0 | 19 | 0 |
| In-school suspension | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Detention | 5 | 0 | 97 |
| Work assignment | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Referral or letter sent home | 29 | 40 | 97 |
| Parent conference | 8 | 1 | <1 |
| Student sent home | 13 | 5 | <1 |
| Minor suspension | 0 | 3 | <1 |
| Major suspension | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total number of student referrals | 668 | 1314 | 2999 |
| Number of administrative referrals | 63 | 210 | 105 |
| Total number of referrals on which administrative action was listed | 227 | 1138 | 2896 |
| Number of suspensions | 4 | 49 | 194 |
| Number of expulsions | 0 | 0 | 5 |

*Actions are reported as percentages based on the number of referrals in which actions were listed. Actions accounting for less than 1 percent at all schools are not included.

The volume of referrals prepared by administrators was considerably higher at Lake School (210 referrals) than at Roberts (63) or at Fort Hudson (105). These numbers represent 16 percent of all referrals at Lake School, 9 percent at Roberts School and less than 4 percent at Fort Hudson. (Data on referral by teachers are reported in Table 4 and discussed below.) As may be seen from the Table 3 percentage figures, Fort Hudson administrators responded to virtually all rule infractions with detention and either a referral or a letter sent home; neither Lake nor Roberts had schoolwide detention. Furthermore, the school-level detention room at Fort Hudson was supervised by a teacher paid to do so. Lake School made frequent use of student conferences, which were infrequently reported at Roberts and Fort Hudson. Roberts had more parent conferences and was unique in using work-service (a restitutive penalty) as a consequence of misbehavior.

As revealed in formal records maintained by the school district, Fort Hudson School made more liberal use of the most severe punishments --suspensions and expulsions. The teachers interviewed at Fort Hudson perceived administrative enforcement to be tough. Five students had been expelled at Fort Hudson School in the 1982-83 school year, whereas none at either Roberts or Lake School had been expelled. Fort Hudson School had 194 suspensions, Lake School had a fourth as many, and Roberts Schools virtually none.[1]

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[1] An explanation for the large discrepencies in Table 3 between the percentages of major suspensions and the numbers of suspensions at Fort Hudson and Lake is that the percentages are based on school records of referral forms and the numbers were obtained from district records. Quite possibly many suspension actions are taken subsequent to or independent of the filing of the in-house disciplinary referral. On the other hand, the Roberts School discrepency between the number of referrals (668) and number of administrative actions taken (227) is less clearly interpretable. It is difficult to expect that this many referrals were never acted upon; rather, the action taken was probably sufficiently light to require no documentation. Just possibly, many cases of rule infractions at Roberts School similarly did not require the formality of a disciplinary referral in the first place.

The staff responsibilities for enforcement also differed at the three schools. Fort Hudson School was the only school to keep the student management specialist's work separate from the enforcement of discipline as called for by the district's job description and as advocated by the district coordinator. Roberts and Lake School were alike in assigning major disciplinary responsibility to their student specialist; there, however, the similarities ended. At Roberts School, the student management specialist was designated in formal policy as the school disciplinarian for all but the most serious offenses. Sixty-two of the 63 administrative referrals at that school were made by the student specialist, the remaining one by the principal. At Lake School, on the other hand, the formal policy designated the principal as the school disciplinarian and gave the specialist corrective responsibilities. In practice, however, this specialist was also the disciplinarian. Of the 210 administrative referrals at Lake School he made 136, the principal 68, and his curriculum specialist 6.

Ostensibly, the specialist's separation from discipline at Fort Hudson made possible a more active program for preventing rule infractions and correcting misbehavior; he made only 13 of the 105 administrative referrals at his school. Most referrals (84) were made by the principals' administrative assistants, the remaining 8 by the curriculum specialist. In addition to punishment, prevention and correction became apparent to us as important factors in characterizing a school's discipline policy during the course of the study. This point was made in interviews with administrators at all three schools.

Only at Fort Hudson were the preventive and corrective functions formalized. There had been a schoolwide student workshop on leadership and conflict resolution, in an attempt to prevent fighting. There were also visible programs to reward good behavior and improvement in behavior. (Such a program was apparent on a smaller scale at Roberts but not at Lake; in

addition, all three schools had "school survival" classes taught by the student management specialist, but these seem to have reached relatively few students.) However, we had the impression from interviews that the counseling and followup of students with disciplinary problems (e.g., former suspendees) were more thoroughly implemented at Roberts than at Fort Hudson or Lake. It must be admitted that the relatively small number of students referred or suspended at Roberts made such followup easier than at Lake or, especially, at Fort Hudson. At Roberts School, the student management specialist and the principal--as well as the administrative assistant and counselor, when called upon--acted in apparent concord to bring the school policy's expectations for student conduct to bear upon misbehavers. Those expectations were clearly articulated to students in a presentation made in each classroom. At a more basic level, the administrators emphasized that it was their purpose to keep students in school because they needed to get an education. This achievement theme (as opposed to emphasis on survival) distinguished the Roberts school response to discipline from that of the other two schools.

There also seemed to be more consistency among administrative disciplinary actions at Roberts and Fort Hudson than at Lake, where there seemed to be inconsistency between the enforcement practices of the principal and student management specialist. When Lake's principal intervened, what would happen was unpredictable so teachers at Lake School, apparently, preferred to send their disciplinary referrals to the student management specialist rather than to their principal. This principal indicated a disinclination to be punitive, although he also espoused the idea of "logical consequences." According to several Lake teachers who were interviewed, the principal had criticized them for referring students. These teachers also stated that, except for suspensions, students were frequently returned to their classrooms with little or no punishment for

misbehavior.[1] In general, there seemed to be some inconsistency between several major factors of the discipline policy: the elaborate code of rules, the principal's espousal of both positive motivation and "logical consequences" in enforcing discipline, and a student management specialist who acted as a counselor while being, in fact, a chief rule enforcer. In her first year at Lake School, the new counselor at the school seemed to be tightening up attendance reporting while working to prevent use of drugs--what many saw as a contributory factor in discipline problems.

The data on administrative enforcement suggest that when preventive and corrective functions are sharply separated from punitive ones, the punitive ones will become more severe. Moreover, the corrective functions will not operate as well under such separation because the division of administrative tasks reduces communication about students.

Another data source for examining administrator enforcement of school rules is, of course, the student. School differences in administrator enforcement, if real and substantive, should be reflected by differences in student reports of strictness. The student questionnaire contained nothing that referred directly to the administrator's role in rule enforcement; however, students were asked how frequently they had received after-school detention or had gotten "away with breaking rules." Both of these questions bear on strictness, as do others regarding "too many rules" and "rules which need changing." A problem with these four questions, however, is that they confuse student acceptance (or policy effectiveness) with strictness. For example, differences between schools in the number of detentions their students received could be due to student non-compliant behavior apart from or in addition to the strictness of an administrator (or teacher). Whether

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[1] None of the interviewed teachers at either Roberts School or Fort Hudson School expressed similar concerns.

or not a school regularly maintained an after school detention room would be another contributing factor here.[1]

## Differences in Teachers' Enforcement of Policy

Data on teachers' enforcement of school rules came from school records of referrals submitted, from teacher questionnaire items, and from teacher interviews. The Table 4 data presents the distributions of student referrals among teachers for the three schools. School differences in the volume of teacher referrals are especially striking: Fort Hudson teachers made roughly four times as many student disciplinary referrals (2538) as did

Table 4

Distribution of Student Referrals Among Teachers at Three Middle Schools
(Percents of referrals are in parenthesis)

| Number of Referrals Per Teacher | Roberts | | Lake | | Fort Hudson | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Referrals | Teachers | Referrals | Teachers | Referrals | Teachers |
| None | 0 ( 0) | 2 | 0 ( 0) | 1 | 0 ( 0) | 0 |
| 1-5 | 13 ( 2) | 6 | 18 ( 3) | 6 | 17 ( 1) | 5 |
| 6-10 | 100 (19) | 12 | 34 ( 5) | 4 | 25 ( 1) | 3 |
| 11-20 | 83 (16) | 6 | 130 (19) | 9 | 64 ( 2) | 4 |
| 21-30 | 152 (29) | 6 | 103 (15) | 4 | 107 ( 4) | 4 |
| 31-40 | 37 ( 7) | 1 | 171 (25) | 5 | 212 ( 8) | 6 |
| 41-50 | 47 ( 9) | 1 | 234 (34) | 5 | 133 ( 5) | 3 |
| 51-100 | 86 (17) | 1 | | | 916 (36) | 12 |
| 100-200 | | | | | 490 (19) | 4 |
| 200 + | | | | | 574 (23) | 2 |
| Totals | 518 | 35 | 690 | 34 | 2538 | 43 |

[1] Student acceptance and compliance behaviors are more fully reported in the subsequent section, which examines factors related to policy effectiveness.

the Roberts (518) or Lake (690) teachers.[1] These differences, of course, were apparent in the previous table summarizing administrator responses to student rule infractions (Table 3). The high number of referrals for rule infractions clearly suggests that Fort Hudson teachers, as a group, were stricter than teachers at Lake or Roberts.

But apart from the more obvious school differences in sheer volume of referrals, the distributions of referrals and of teachers making them are interesting in themselves. In all three schools a small proportion of teachers submitted the bulk of their school's disciplinary referrals. Nine Roberts teachers accounted for 62 percent of their school's referrals, ten Lake teachers accounted for 59 percent of their school's referrals, and six Fort Hudson teachers accounted for 42 percent of their school's referrals. If these teachers simply had the especially "troublesome" students, clearly the repeated referrals were having little effect other than temporarily removing the student from the classroom. However, those "troublesome" students with the largest numbers of referrals were receiving their referrals from all or nearly all of their teachers--some (the stricter teachers) giving more referrals than others. Therefore, an alternative explanation is that each schools' high referral teachers were both more strict and more likely to refer their students than to discipline them themselves.

Similar clusters of teachers also exist at the low referral end of the distribution in each school. Eight Roberts teachers, representing nearly a fourth of their school's teachers, and seven Lake teachers, representing a fifth of their staff, accounted for less than 3 percent of teacher referrals. At Fort Hudson 12 teachers, representing over a fourth of their staff,

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[1]The total number of referrals made at these three schools, including those made by administrators, substitutes, bus drivers, etc., was 688 at Roberts, 1314 at Lake, and 2999 at Fort Hudson.

accounted for only 4 percent of teacher referrals. Together, these 27 teachers averaged less than three referrals apiece for the entire school year. In contrast to their high frequency referral colleagues, they appeared to be "self managing."[1] This extreme heterogenity in discipline practice is equally evident in all schools and marks the priority of individual modes of student management over that of administrative or group determinates.

Teacher responses to the five questionnaire items on policy enforcement are summarized in Table 5, which shows similar proportions of teachers at each school agreeing that it is "the total staff's business to enforce school rules" (approximately 80 percent of the teachers at each school). Moreover, the proportions of teachers describing themselves as either strict (approximately 66 percent of the teachers at each school) or lenient (approximately 10 percent of the teachers at each school) were similar at all three schools.

It is interesting to note that these self descriptions of "strict" or "lenient" varied with the particlar rule. For example, approximately one third of the teachers in all three schools reported themselves as "lenient" in enforcing the "tardy" rule. However, side by side comparisons of teacher

[1]To suggest that a teacher who does not refer students to a further authority is not strict is to exclude the possibility of a teacher being sufficiently "strict" in that he or she inhibits or otherwise controls student misbehavior. However interesting on the individual classroom management level, this "effectively strict" teacher is beyond our present focus on schoolwide policy.

Table 5

Teachers' Enforcement of Rules at Three Middle Schools
(Percent of teachers selecting responses to questionnaire items*)

| Item | Response | Percent Agreeing with Item: Roberts | Lake | Fort Hudson |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rules it is the total staff's business to enforce: | no radios or tape recorders | 83 | 89 | 88 |
| | report for class cuts | 93 | 82 | 82 |
| | report for class tardies | 79 | 68 | 85 |
| | report for physical abuse | 86 | 82 | 87 |
| | report for class disruption | 79 | 79 | 88 |
| | report for defying teacher | 86 | 74 | 85 |
| | average | 84 | 79 | 86 |
| Rules I am strict in enforcing: | no radios or tape recorders | 59 | 48 | 56 |
| | report for class cuts | 76 | 56 | 62 |
| | report for class tardies | 41 | 44 | 56 |
| | report for physical abuse | 100 | 89 | 94 |
| | report for class disruption | 55 | 63 | 79 |
| | report for defying teacher | 66 | 67 | 82 |
| | average | 66 | 62 | 72 |
| Rules I am lenient in enforcing: | no radios or tape recorders | 0 | 18 | 24 |
| | report for class cuts | 10 | 4 | 12 |
| | report for class tardies | 34 | 30 | 29 |
| | report for physical abuse | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | report for class disruption | 14 | 0 | 12 |
| | report for defying teacher | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| | average | 11 | 9 | 13 |
| Rules that some students get away with breaking more than do other students: | no radios or tape recorders | 14 | 44 | 4 |
| | report for class cuts | 17 | 59 | 12 |
| | report for class tardies | 34 | 67 | 49 |
| | report for physical abuse | 24 | 30 | 12 |
| | report for class disruption | 49 | 70 | 38 |
| | report for defying teacher | 31 | 52 | 24 |
| | average | 28 | 55 | 23 |
| Importance that students learn to make own decisions about obeying rules: | very important | 69 | 69 | 90 |
| | moderately | 31 | 24 | 6 |
| | not especially | | 7 | 3 |

*Total number of respondents: Roberts, 29, Lake, 29, Fort Hudson, 34.

responses at each school revealed that a larger proportion of Fort Hudson teachers saw themselves as being strict in reporting tardies, class disruption, and student defiance than did Roberts teachers. Nearly half of Lake teachers did not report themselves as being strict in reporting class cuts, as compared to less than a fourth of the Roberts teachers. These differences are consistent with impressions from interviews that Fort Hudson was stricter overall and that Lake was particularly lax on attendance.[1]

The major differences between the schools in Table 5 relate to perceived inconsistencies in rule enforcement. For all six rules on the questionnaire, more Lake School teachers (55 percent) agreed that "some students get away with breaking rules more than do other students" than did Roberts teachers (32 percent) or Fort Hudson teachers (23 percent). Except for the "tardy" rule, the Fort Hudson teacher responses were especially low in viewing their school's rule enforcement as inconsistent (or discriminating) among students. These same teachers were nearly unanimous (90 percent) in responding that it was "very important" for students to learn to make their own decisions (compared to 69 percent at Roberts and Lake Schools).

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[1] If 9 percent of teachers report themselves as "strict" regarding rules for physical abuse, to be noncontradictory, only six percent can report themselves "lenient" regarding the same rule. Though complementarity between the self reports of strictness and leniency for rules with high response percentages is logically required, the middle ground of identifying oneself as neither strict nor lenient permits considerable independence between the two item responses.

Two items on the student questionnaire focused on laxity in enforcement (students getting away with breaking rules) and injustice or error in enforcement (students being blamed for breaking rules when it wasn't their fault) are relevant here. Student responses to these items are presented in Table 6. To both questions, student responses were nearly identical in all three schools--approximately 20 percent reporting that "most of the time" they get away with breaking rules, nearly the same percent reporting that they "never" get away with breaking a rule, and just over a third reporting that they are "sometimes" blamed for something they didn't do. Apparently student responses to these items did not exhibit differences in either teachers' or administrators' enforcement of rules at the three schools, as did some of the other measures. In particular, the different proportions of teachers in the three schools reporting that "some students get away with breaking rules more than others" is inconsistent with the lack of differences in student reports. Perhaps the general similarities in students' perceptions of rule enforcement reflect both their own limited knowledge of other schools' rules and the overriding institutional uniformity of school itself. The student interview data bear out this inference; in each school, students acknowledged the threat of enforcement despite awareness that some teachers varied in enforcement.

Table 6

Students' Reports of Rule Enforcement at Three Middle Schools
(Percent of Students* Selecting Responses to Questionnaire Items.)

| Item | Response | Roberts | Lake | Fort Hudson |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often I get away with breaking rules | most of the time | 20 | 18 | 21 |
| | sometimes | 61 | 65 | 60 |
| | never | 19 | 17 | 19 |
| How often I am blamed for breaking rules when it is not my fault | always | - | 2 | 1 |
| | occasionally | 34 | 32 | 27 |
| | sometimes | 33 | 36 | 39 |
| | never | 31 | 30 | 32 |

*Total numbers of respondents: Roberts, 538 students; Lake, 455 students; Fort Hudson, 552 students.

A further consideration here is the difficulty of comparing students' responses to questions on issues such as getting away with or being wrongly blamed for breaking rules when these problems are more prevalent at some schools than at others. For example, is student A in a "strict" school who misbehaves 30 times and gets away with it 5 times ("sometimes") comparable to student B in a less strict school who misbehaves 4 times and gets away with it once ("sometimes")? Is a rarely misbehaving student who responds "never" to the question on "getting away with it" describing "strictness" and/or "consistency" of enforcement in his or her school? Finally, do more "never" responses mean "better behaved" students or "more thoroughly apprehended" students?

## Policy as a Construct: Relationships Among Components

Before examining plausible influences on school discipline policy, it is first important to consider the internal dynamics of policy as a construct. The written discipline policies at Fort Hudson and Lake Schools

were more elaborate and more protective of the school than was Roberts School's policy. We have hypothesized that such differences may partly be due to varying teacher involvement in policy initiation, which was greater at Fort Hudson and Lake than at Roberts. Of the three schools, Fort Hudson's teachers reported the most participation in policy development through a decentralized system that gave teacher teams responsibility for making policy. At first glance, Lake School hardly seemed to involve teachers in policy development, at least at the time of the study; however, the school's written policy had been drawn up two years earlier in a schoolwide effort, possibly influenced by the teacher union leader. Hence, that policy was the result of strong teacher participation.

The differences in the enforcement of discipline policy at the schools may be partly due to differences in the administrators' articulation of policy. Lake School's administrators were not enforcing the written policy partly because they emphasized correction of misbehavior more than the written code did. On the other hand, the level of enforcement at Fort Hudson did not seem to be affected by administrators' concerns for prevention of misbehavior, possibly because teacher teams had reduced the sphere of administrative enforcement to imposition of penalties.

Teachers' enforcement of policy was strictest at the school where administrative enforcement was strictest--Fort Hudson. Similarly, teachers' enforcement was least strict and least consistent at Lake School, where administrative enforcement was also least consistent. Hence, we hypothesize that teachers' enforcement is influenced by administrative enforcement.

Teachers' inconsistent enforcement of a discipline policy could affect an administrator's willingness to enforce rules or involve teachers in modifying policy. The Lake School principal described the teachers' participation in current policy development activities as restricted, possibly because he didn't trust several teachers on his faculty to make

policy changes. His picture of the teachers' current inconsistency in enforcing rules on attendance may also have reduced his willingness to provide predictable and punitive consequences for those students the teachers referred to him. Such effects must remain speculative in the present study, however.

## Factors Accounting for Policy Differences

Differences in Student Characteristics. The differences in the three schools' discipline policies were compared with differences in student characteristics. Characteristics of students were described in Table 1. In terms of number of students, Fort Hudson School had the largest enrollment and Lake School the lowest, although they were alike in terms of student turnover. Fort Hudson School also had the highest proportion of minority students--48 percent compared to 34 percent for Roberts and 15 percent for Lake. Over 70 percent of Lake's minority students were Southeast Asian in origin, while at Roberts and Fort Hudson schools approximately four out of five of the minority students were black. Only two percent of Lake's total student body was black, as compared to 28 and 37 percent at Roberts and Fort Hudson schools, respectively.

Ethnic composition aside, all three schools dealt with sizeable proportions of students from low income families. Roberts School perhaps had an advantage because entering students seemed a little better prepared academically than students at the other two schools and because the school's immediate environment was more affluent than that of the other two schools. On the other hand, Fort Hudson school had the highest proportion of students eligible for Federal lunch subsidy--33 percent, as opposed to 27 percent at Roberts and 23 percent at Lake. Only Fort Hudson school qualified as a Chapter I school.

A general hypothesis on the relationship between the differences in

the schools' discipline policies and student characteristics might be that the greater the school's proportion of students from low-income or lower-status groups in the community, the more protective the school's written policy is likely to be. However, a full understanding of that relationship between student characteristics and school policy would have to take into account the degree of political organization of lower-status groups in the community and the pressure such groups might have on district policy. Where such political pressure is strong, one might also expect to find written policy on the correction of unruly students, although the integration of protective and corrective policy would not necessarily follow.

Personnel Characteristics. As discussed previously, the three schools' principals varied in their administrative backgrounds. To summarize, only Lake's principal was still in mid-career; both Roberts and Fort Hudson had senior principals. However, the principals at Lake and Roberts had both started their middle schools just five years earlier, while Fort Hudson's principal had been at his school for twenty years and had watched over its gradual evolution.

Also noted earlier were the differences in the stability of the three schools' faculties. The oldest school, Fort Hudson, has the fewest new teachers--nearly half had been there at least five years. At the other schools, less than a fourth of the teachers--mostly either new recruits or transfers from tributary K-8 schools--had been at their schools that long. We would anticipate that the staffs with more shared years of teaching in the same building would be more cohesive.

Another important difference in the schools' faculties was that one principal--Roberts School's--apparently had been active in selecting or retaining teachers who expressed some support for his policy preferences. In contrast, some teachers at Lake had persistently resisted their principal's preferences, perhaps because of a stronger district teachers' association

presence. Still, there was little difference in teacher turnover rates during the past two years at either school.

The teachers were organized differently at each of the three schools. Fort Hudson and Lake Schools had team structures for both governance and curricular coordination. Each school had at least one minimally functioning team, but the Fort Hudson system seemed to be more active overall than the Lake system. The Roberts School teacher teams seemed to be even less active in rule initiation and modification. We would hypothesize, therefore, that the strength of intermediate teacher teams influences the level of teacher participation in policy development.

In addition to demographic and occupational differences in the personnel, we had expected administrators' and teachers' belief systems about education and discipline to account for policy differences at each school. In particular, we had looked for philosophical polarizations such as Metz (1978) described. However, the question of philosophy proved to be more complicated than we had anticipated. It was not adequate to treat philosophy as an independent variable that was associated with individuals and that somehow affected policy. Instead, we found philosophy bound up with policy and personnel's experience with policy. We also found administrators' philosophies defined in contrast to the district's philosophy and to the beliefs of teachers. Much of what we have to say about philosophy, thus, has already been said in describing policy content and enforcement. What remains to be said has to do with staff members' rationales for developing and enforcing policy and, particularly, with their attitudes towards the kinds of students [illegible] by the school.

The staff members' descriptions of the student populations went beyond the demographic characteristics noted above. Administrators and teachers at all three schools felt that their schools served substantial numbers of difficult students. The Fort Hudson staff provided anecdotal

evidence of some very tough household and neighborhood conditions, suggesting that the school dealt with a sizeable number of students from very difficult home environments. Fort Hudson teachers perceived their students as needing structure. The Roberts staff also described many of their students as coming from difficult home conditions and referred to a knifing incident between two of their students the preceding year as illustrative of the presence of tough students. Yet the perception of difficult cases among the student population seemed to generate a sympathetic response from school personnel that allowed school personnel and parents to work in cooperation. Lake School staff also regarded their students as difficult, but here the concern with student needs was muted--the staff perceived many students and parents as indifferent to school.

We would characterize Fort Hudson and Lake staffs as perceiving that they had a greater discipline problem with their students than did the Roberts staff. It is reasonable to conjecture that such perceptions determine feelings of vulnerability and threat that lead to the development and strict enforcement of a more protective policy.

We would also trace the degree of emphasis on correction of misbehavior to the principal's beliefs about discipline and his style of management with teachers. At Fort Hudson, the principal retained discipline beliefs from the time when the school had served a small, rural community. While he might encourage preventive measures such as close faculty-student relationships and special events to build the school's ethos, the principal subordinated the correction of misbehavers to the protection of his school. At Roberts, the principal believed that it was possible to change a student's behavior if one took the time necessary. The student management specialist emphasized students' need for an education, not just survival in the institution. At Lake, the principal sympathized with the more mature early adolescent who was trapped in middle school. Moreover, that principal stated

several times that punishment is not effective in changing behavior. It was not clear, however, what the Lake principal and student management specialist did think would change behavior. They may have perceived their students as less responsive to reform than their counterparts at Roberts School.

## F. FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR DIFFERENCES AMONG SCHOOLS IN POLICY EFFECTIVENESS

### Differences in Teachers' Satisfaction with Policy.

One criterion for the effectiveness of student discipline policy is teacher satisfaction. This study did not explore the consequences of policy for teachers' feelings of security (as did the Safe Schools study with its index of teacher victimization--Gottfredson and Daiger 1979). Nor did it explore the impact of discipline on classroom instruction (as did the effective schools research--Edmonds 1979). However, we assume that teacher satisfaction with discipline policy relates to these dimensions. More explicitly, we assume teacher satisfaction is an index of how well the school is functioning as an organization.

Responses to teacher questionnaire items relating to satisfaction with policy are presented in Table 7. As shown in this table, teachers in the three schools differed dramatically in their satisfaction with various aspects of student discipline policy, including the following: their endorsement of the school's discipline philosophy, their satisfaction with policy initiation and modification, their agreement with administrative management of discipline, their views of the policy's adequacy, and their perceptions of the consistency of policy enforcement.

With respect to the teaching staff's endorsement of the school's underlying philosophy of discipline, Fort Hudson teachers reported the highest level with 65 percent reporting full endorsement and 35 percent partial endorsement. Lake School reported the lowest level of endorsement with only 11 percent reporting full endorsement and 78 percent partial endorsement. Roberts School fell between these extremes with 35 percent full endorsement and 65 percent partial endorsement. Lake School alone had teachers (11 percent) who felt that the teaching staff only "minimally" endorsed their school's philosophy regarding student discipline.

Table 7

Teacher Satisfaction with Policy at Three Middle Schools
(Percent of Teachers* Selecting Responses to Questionnaire Items)

| Item | Selected Response | Roberts | Lake | Fort Hudson |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teaching staff endorsement of schools philosophy regarding discipline: | full | 38 | 11 | 65 |
| | partial | 62 | 78 | 35 |
| | minimal | 0 | 11 | 0 |
| Teaching staff support for procedures for establishing discipline rules: | full | 41 | 3 | 79 |
| | partial | 59 | 93 | 18 |
| | minimal | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Teaching staff agreement with administrator's management of student discipline: | unanimous | 3 | 0 | 15 |
| | nearly unanimous | 69 | 29 | 74 |
| | split | 28 | 71 | 12 |
| Preference for teacher participation in deciding discipline policies: | more | 52 | 88 | 29 |
| | less | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | no change | 45 | 12 | 71 |
| Adequacy of school's discipline policies: | sufficient and appropriate | 17 | 8 | 47 |
| | need minor change | 72 | 50 | 50 |
| | need major overhaul | 10 | 43 | 3 |
| Rules for which penalties are too light: | no radios or tape recorders | 7 | 11 | 3 |
| | class cuts | 17 | 52 | 21 |
| | report class tardies | 24 | 52 | 6 |
| | for physical abuse | 34 | 59 | 21 |
| | class disruption | 45 | 63 | 21 |
| | defying teacher | 34 | 52 | 32 |
| | average for six rules | 27 | 48 | 17 |

*Total number of teachers responding: 29 at Roberts and Lake, 34 at Fort Hudson.

A very similar pattern exists in the data on the teaching staff's satisfaction with policy initiation and modification. Full support of procedures for establishing discipline policies was reported by 79, 41, and 3 percent of the Fort Hudson, Roberts, and Lake teachers, respectively. These differences are repeated and amplified in teacher responses to the questionnaire item regarding the desired level of teacher participation in deciding discipline policies in each school. Only 29 percent of Fort Hudson teachers preferred more participation in contrast to just over half of Roberts teachers and 88 percent of the Lake teachers.

Teacher perceptions of teaching staff agreement with their administrator's management of student discipline also followed the pattern: 89, 72 and 29 percent of the teachers at Fort Hudson, Roberts, and Lake Schools (respectively) reported unanimous or nearly unanimous agreement. This widespread reporting of Lake teachers' disagreement with their administrator's discipline management probably included a perception that the penalties for breaking rules were too light. Over half of the Lake teachers checked this response for every rule listed on the questionnaire except the ban on radios and tape recorders, as compared to about a fourth of either the Roberts or the Fort Hudson teachers.

Furthermore, this pattern was continued in teachers' reports of their own views on the adequacy of their school's discipline policy; nearly half of Fort Hudson teachers found policies sufficient and adequate, whereas 43 percent of Lake teachers thought policies needed a major overhaul. Again Roberts School falls in the middle with 72 percent suggesting need for a minor overhaul. Clearly, Fort Hudson teachers were the most satisfied with their school policy, and Lake teachers were quite dissatisfied.

The ordering of schools by levels of teacher satisfaction was identical for all items in Table 7. This consistency suggests a "halo"

effect which makes separating the strands of influence on satisfaction difficult.

We had surmised that teachers would be satisfied with discipline policy if administrators' and teachers' discipline philosophies were similar. Lacking a quantitative measure of discipline philosophy, we could only note that administrators at Fort Hudson spoke of a common staff approach to discipline and that the Roberts principal considered his staff to be uniform in their approaches (although he was aware that some teachers preferred stricter enforcement). On the whole, teachers at those two schools supported their administrators' characterizations of consistency and consensus. Because we have come to regard discipline "philosophy" as indistinguishable from policy, we now prefer to say that teachers and administrators articulated policy in similar terms at Fort Hudson and Roberts Schools. In contrast, the articulation of policy by the principal and teachers at Lake School exhibited disparities. Hence, we can account for the lower level of teacher satisfaction at Lake School in terms of differences in articulated policy.

Another factor distinguishing Lake from the other two schools was teachers' perceptions of consistency and predictability in the administrator's enforcement. As has been shown in Table 7, Lake teachers were most likely to report that some students got away with breaking rules more than others; some of this inconsistency in enforcement may have been attributed to administrators. A less tangible difference between Lake and the other two schools lay in the tone of administrative enforcement of rules. Comments by Lake teachers indicated that they felt criticized and undermined in their attempts to enforce rules.

Somewhat overshadowed by the extreme dissatisfaction reported by Lake school teachers regarding their school's discipline policies are the consistent differences in this same regard between the Roberts and the Fort

Hudson teachers. On all the teacher satisfaction items reported in Table 7, Fort Hudson teachers indicated greater teacher satisfaction with their school's discipline policies than did the Roberts teachers. Several previously discussed differences likely contribute to this. First, Fort Hudson teachers reported more involvement in developing school rules on the questionnaire. Second, administrative enforcement of rules was more severe at Fort Hudson than at Roberts--detention and suspension at Fort Hudson versus work-service and parent conferences at Roberts.[1] Fort Hudson teachers were also less likely than Roberts teachers to report inconsistency in enforcement--i.e., that some students got away with breaking rules more than others. Third, Fort Hudson teachers generally had been together longer at their school than had faculties at the other two schools, so this may have contributed to satisfaction through an enhanced collegiality.

Differences in teachers' satisfaction were hard to link to differences in student characteristics. Although we have hypothesized that the proportion of students coming from lower-status groups affects the emphasis on protection in policy content, there is no parallel influence on teacher satisfaction. In fact, Lake School, with the fewest minority and low-income students, had the lowest teacher satisfaction, and Fort Hudson, with the most low-status students, had the highest satisfaction among teachers.

Differences in Students' Acceptance of Policy

Another criterion of policy effectiveness is the students' attitude towards their schools' discipline policies. If too many students see discipline policy--especially policy enforcement--as oppressive, unfair, or

[1] Lake School was stricter than Roberts in suspensions but more lenient in terms of penalties in school--little other than student conferences.

unjust, the school's short-term successes in controlling behavior are likely to be short-lived, resulting in long-term failures in the socialization of students. We were interested in differences in students' acceptance of policy at each school that might parallel the differences in policy components reported above. However, the student questionnaire data in Table 8 show that students hold similar attitudes across all three schools. There were virtually no differences in the percentages of students reporting that their school had too many rules (about half the students reported "yes") or that rules were fairly enforced (about two-thirds of the students reported "yes"). Similarly, there were only minor differences among schools in the percentages of students reporting that their teachers were too strict: 46 percent of Fort Hudson students, 43 percent of Roberts students, and 35 percent of Lake School students.[1]

As in the previous discussion of students' views on rule enforcement, it may be unreasonable to expect students to compare their school's policy with some abstract ideal. Possibly whatever prevails is considered fair (within reasonable bounds).

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[1]Comparisons of responses of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders revealed only minor differences between these student groups. Intergrade comparisons have not been included in this report since no differences of interests among schools was noted.

Table 8

Students' Acceptance of Policy at Three Middle Schools
(Percent of Students Selecting Responses to Questionnaire Items*)

| Item | Response | Roberts | Lake | Fort Hudson |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rules are fairly enforced in my school: | yes | 68 | 65 | 67 |
| | no | 32 | 35 | 33 |
| Most of my teachers are too strict about rules: | yes | 43 | 35 | 46 |
| | no | 57 | 65 | 54 |
| My school has too many rules: | yes | 48 | 49 | 51 |
| | no | 52 | 51 | 49 |
| Rules needing changes:** | any rule mentioned | 64 | 57 | 77 |
| | no eating rule | 7 | 4 | 8 |
| | no gum chewing rule | 18 | 22 | 21 |
| | no candy eating rule | 24 | 6 | 16 |
| | tardiness rule | 8 | 2 | 20 |
| | no radio rule | 3 | 6 | 2 |
| | closed campus rule | 9 | 18 | 1 |
| | pass requirements | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| | detention rule | 3 | 1 | 13 |
| | dress rule | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| | no fighting rule | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| | no touching rule | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| | misc. (no supplies, etc.) | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| | all rules | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| | no rules | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | no rules mentioned | 36 | 43 | 23 |

*Total number of respondents--Roberts, 538 students; Lake, 455 students; Fort Hudson, 552 students.

**Total number of mentions of rules--547 by 344 Roberts students, 370 by 259 Lake students and 494 by 425 Fort Hudson students.

A further way of examining students' acceptance of their school's disciplinary policy is to consider their responses to the open-ended question "Which school rule needs changing?" The proportion of students responding is in itself an indication of acceptance. More than three-fourths (77 percent) of the Fort Hudson students responding to the questionnaire nominated one or more rules for change, compared to 64 percent of Roberts students and only 57 percent of Lake students. These differences suggest that Lake students were most accepting of their school's discipline policy and Fort Hudson students least accepting. This is the reverse of the pattern of differences in teacher satisfaction noted above (Table 7), but it is consistent with the (weak) ordering of schools in teacher reports of strictness.[1]

Also relevant here are the specific rules students felt needed changing. The rules most mentioned and apparently of most concern to all students were more peripheral to staff concerns--those rules restricting candy, food, and gum. In fact, complaints about various rules on eating accounted for a third to a half of all write-ins in the three schools. At Fort Hudson School, however, twice as many students objected to the rule on tardiness (over 100 students) as at the other two schools combined. This is the rule that Fort Hudson teachers were strictest in enforcing. Seventy-two Fort Hudson students also singled out detention, which was far more strictly supervised there than at the other two schools. Another frequent mention was the rule on a closed campus, but this was principally objected to by Lake students. It may be remembered that Fort Hudson School had a natural setting which in itself made leaving that school more difficult.

The students interviewed by the researchers amplified these findings.

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[1] Another explanation is that Fort Hudson students received more encouragement to resolve their problems individually and to question conditions affecting them.

One of the original concerns of the study was whether students in different schools would acquire different attitudes about the authority underlying school discipline. Metz (1978) had suggested that students who still retained a child's personalistic perception of authority might become alienated by an adult authority they saw as idiosyncratic and arbitrary. However, she felt that other students would come to perceive a moral order underlying the authority of teachers and administrators, which could be used to challenge specific authoritative acts but would in general contribute to the legitimacy of institutions. Where it was possible to probe students' perceptions of school authority and its rationale in student interviews, the common finding across schools was that without rules and their strict enforcement, "disaster" would result. Although some students, especially at Roberts School, were aware that teachers' personal authority needs and strictness varied with different students, they still believed that rules benefitted students who "needed to learn" and would "get out of hand" without discipline.

## Differences in the Incidence of Student Misbehavior

Our analysis of the incidence of student misbehavior begins with school records of student referrals for rule infractions, then moves to perceptual and self-report data from questionnaires and interviews. Table 9 displays the frequencies and relative percentages of referrals for various types of student misbehavior at each school. The types of misbehavior

Table 9

Incidence of Categories of Student Misbehavior at Three Middle Schools
(Number and Percent of Different Infractions Appearing on Disciplinary Referrals)

| Category of Infraction | Roberts N | Roberts % | Lake N | Lake % | Fort Hudson N | Fort Hudson % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Absenteeism: | | | | | | |
| Repeated tardiness | 58 | 9 | 16 | 1 | 370 | 12 |
| Cutting class | 35 | 5 | 66 | 5 | 135 | 4 |
| Leaving class without permission | 21 | 3 | 11 | 1 | 83 | 3 |
| Leaving campus without permission | 7 | 1 | 69 | 5 | 3 | <1 |
| Truancy | 3 | <1 | 34 | 3 | 23 | 1 |
| Failure to appear at detention | 63 | 9 | 1 | <1 | 66 | 2 |
| | 187 | | 197 | | 680 | |
| Unacceptable behavior with students: | | | | | | |
| Threats or intimidation | 36 | 5 | 210 | 16 | 61 | 2 |
| Pushing, shoving, or hitting | 81 | 12 | 92 | 7 | 110 | 4 |
| Fighting | 44 | 7 | 241 | 18 | 37 | 1 |
| | 161 | | 543 | | 208 | |
| Unacceptable behavior with staff: | | | | | | |
| No materials for work | 22 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 400 | 13 |
| Unsatisfactory work | 0 | - | 0 | - | 248 | 8 |
| Refusal to work | 65 | 10 | 25 | 2 | 202 | 7 |
| Team warning | 0 | - | 0 | - | 79 | 2 |
| Disruptive behavior on bus | 13 | 2 | 83 | 6 | 59 | 2 |
| Disruption of class | 163 | 24 | 300 | 23 | 855 | 28 |
| Talking back, disrespect | 38 | 6 | 99 | 8 | 127 | 4 |
| Refusal to obey, insubordination | 51 | 8 | 118 | 9 | 75 | 3 |
| Destruction of staff property | 1 | <1 | 1 | <1 | 92 | 2 |
| Abusive language | 30 | 4 | 62 | 5 | 35 | 1 |
| | 383 | | 695 | | 2093 | |
| Unacceptable individual behavior: | | | | | | |
| Chewing gum, eating | 20 | 3 | 3 | <1 | 152 | 5 |
| Throwing things, etc. | 20 | 3 | 38 | 3 | 77 | 3 |
| Disruptive behavior | 21 | 3 | 117 | 9 | 42 | 1 |
| Misuse of school property | 20 | 3 | 31 | 2 | 44 | 2 |
| | 81 | | 189 | | 315 | |
| Criminal behavior | | | | | | |
| Theft | 4 | 1 | 55 | 4 | 4 | <1 |
| Vandalism (and other) | 7 | 1 | 36 | 3 | 6 | <1 |
| | 11 | | 91 | | 10 | |
| Total number of referrals | 668 | | 1314 | | 2999 | |
| Total number of infractions | 823 | | 1715 | | 3306 | |

are grouped in the five general categories that the district uses to classify misbehavior leading to suspension: absenteeism, unacceptable behavior with other students, unacceptable behavior with staff members, unacceptable individual behavior, and criminal behavior. One should remember, when comparing the frequencies of reported referrals at the three schools, that such reports are necessarily affected by the zeal with which schools enforced rules and recorded any action taken.[1] Other information, even the paucity or absence of the data itself, properly enters into our interpretations. Thus, we suggest that the Lake School figures are very likely underestimates--particularly in the area of attendance. Our sense is that Roberts School personnel enforced the rules but didn't always bother to record the event.

The substantial differences in the schools' total referrals for the year (next to bottom line in Table 9) have been noted in connection with earlier discussions of data collecting and administrator and teacher enforcement. The somewhat larger "total number of infractions" (bottom line of Table 9) reflects the common practice of citing more than one infraction on a single disciplinary referral. The percentages for each school refer to how often a particular infraction appeared on a school's record of referrals, permitting examination of the relative emphases the schools placed on different kinds of rule infractions.

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[1] Differences in school enrollments also affect these frequencies but to a limited extent. Fort Hudson's enrollment was nine percent higher than Robert's, which in turn was six percent higher than Lake School's. Adjusting the Fort Hudson frequencies by a factor of .87 actually make little difference in school comparisons; the total of 2999 referrals reduces only to around 2600, still very high. For Roberts School, the correction factor to align with Lake School enrollment would be minor factor of .95.

Several school similaries and differences are apparent. For example, at both Roberts and Fort Hudson Schools absenteeism accounted for approximately twenty percent of the infractions cited on student referrals. At Lake School, absenteeism accounted for nearer ten percent. This lesser emphasis on attendance-related infractions is interesting because Lake School has a higher district-reported absence rate (though only slightly higher than Fort Hudson's) and because Lake was also the only school whose administrators singled out attendance as a special school problem. The especially large number of infractions for repeated tardiness recorded at Fort Hudson School, accounting for over half (54 percent) of the 680 citations in that category, suggests a tough teacher-monitored policy in this regard. Tardiness was seldom cited on referrals at Lake, where cutting class, leaving school, and truancy were more frequent citations.

The major infraction at all three schools, however, was "unacceptable behavior with staff," accounting for over forty percent of Roberts' and Lake's reported student infractions and over sixty percent of Fort Hudson's. Another way of looking at this is to note that citations in this category appeared on just over half of all Roberts and Lake referrals and on over seventy percent of Fort Hudson referrals. In all three schools the most frequent single infraction was "class disruption," which accounted for one-fifth to one-fourth of all infractions. A distinction within this "unacceptable behavior with staff" category is the much heavier emphasis among Fort Hudson teachers on citations for classroom work (i.e., "not having materials for work," "unsatisfactory work," "refusal to work"). At Fort Hudson, these unacceptable student behaviors were cited as a reason for disciplinary referral 850 times, appearing on nearly 50 percent of all Fort Hudson referrals on record. At Lake School these infractions were cited on only two percent of the referrals, at Roberts School on thirteen percent of the referrals. However, citations for "talking back," disrespect, refusal to

obey, insubordination, and abusive language were all made less frequently at Fort Hudson (on eight percent of all referrals) than they were at either Roberts (on 18 percent of all referrals) or Lake (on 21 percent of all referrals).

The Table 9 data on unacceptable behavior with other students, is especially surprising. As we reported earlier, the student suspension data and the staff reports of serious student fighting suggested that Fort Hudson would have a specially high incidence of referrals in this category. However, neither in frequencies nor in percentages of total referrals was Fort Hudson highest. Proportional to their school enrollment, Lake students received more than seven times as many referrals for fighting as did Fort Hudson students and were referred both for threats, or intimidation and for pushing, shoving, or hitting proportionally four times as often as were Fort Hudson students. It is also evident from data in Table 9 that Roberts students were nearly as likely to have been referred as Fort Hudson students for these same reasons. Unacceptable inter-student behavior as a whole appeared on only seven percent of Fort Hudson referrals, compared to 24 percent of those at Roberts and 41 percent of those at Lake. The low number of referrals and the much higher number of suspension citations suggest that most of the serious fighting incidents at Fort Hudson led directly to suspension without the intermediate stage of referral, which was used primarily for detention. Even so, the hundred or so cases of suspension for fighting at Fort Hudson would not have equalled Lake students' 241 referrals for fighting. In general, on the basis of the categories of infractions, student conflict misbehavior was highest at Lake, with Fort Hudson second (keeping in mind the hundred suspensions for fighting) and Roberts lowest. The criminal behavior category (also lower for Fort Hudson because suspensions apparently were not included), though infrequent in relative incidence, supports this ordering.

The incidence of student misbehavior may also be measured by the proportion of students receiving referrals for misbehavior. Table 10 shows that 61 percent of the students enrolled sometime during the year at Fort Hudson School had been referred at least once for disciplinary reasons, compared to 48 percent of the students at Lake School and just 20 percent of the students at Roberts School. Thus, the general ordering implied by the differences in absolute numbers of referrals is confirmed here. Table 10 also shows varying number of referrals that students received. In all three schools, approximately 30 percent of those students who received one referral avoided receiving a second one. However, differences between schools become more pronounced as the number of referrals received increases. Twenty Roberts students, 37 Lake students, and 77 Fort Hudson students--just under 10 percent of that school's total enrollment--had received more than ten referrals, an indication of serious repeated misbehavior. Even more pronounced were the differences in the numbers of students who had received more than twenty disciplinary referrals during the year--three Roberts students, nine (three times as many) Lake students, and twenty-one (seven times as many) Fort Hudson students. This small proportion of the student population almost continually seemed to be on report.

Table 10

Students' Referral Rates and Academic Performance at Three Middle Schools (Number and Percent of Students Receiving Varying Number of Referrals at Each School and Mean Grade Point Average)

| Number of Referrals Received | Roberts | | Lake | | Fort Hudson | | Mean GPA | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | Roberts | Lake | Fort Hudson |
| 1 | 52 | 7 | 115 | 16 | 139 | 16 | 2.42 | 2.57 | 2.80 |
| 2-5 | 60 | 8 | 140 | 19 | 211 | 25 | 1.99 | 2.35 | 2.63 |
| 6-10 | 17 | 2 | 59 | 8 | 91 | 11 | 1.88 | 2.09 | 2.32 |
| 11-15 | 12 | 2 | 21 | 3 | 34 | 4 | 1.59 | 1.73 | 2.09 |
| 16-20 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 22 | 3 | 1.57 | 1.83 | 2.08 |
| 21-30 | 3 | <1 | 9 | 1 | 16 | 2 | 1.76 | 1.96 | 1.79 |
| 31+ | 0 | - | 0 | - | 5 | 1 | - | - | 1.69 |
| All students receiving referrals | 145 | 20 | 351 | 48 | 518 | 61 | 2.08 | 2.32 | 2.52 |
| Students not receiving referrals | 583 | 80 | 380 | 52 | 337 | 39 | 2.83 | 3.11 | 3.20 |
| All students | 728 | | 731 | | 855 | | 2.70 | 2.73 | 2.79 |

Table 10 also lists the grade averages (GPA's) reported in students' end-of-term records.[1] As is reported in the bottom line of the table, the highest average GPA among the three schools for the whole student body was at Fort Hudson (2.79); the lowest was at Roberts (2.70). This is interesting because, as noted earlier (Table 1), Roberts students generally scored slightly better on district achievement tests than students at the other two schools. One explanation could be that grading was tougher at Roberts School. In all three schools the average GPA of students receiving

[1]The data in these records on absences and tardies proved uninterpretable (and suspect) from one school and, therefore, are not included in this table.

no referrals was approximately three-quarters of a grade point higher than the average for those students who received one or more referrals, a considerable difference. The average grade of non-referred students approaches a B at Roberts School and exceeds a B at both Fort Hudson and Lake Schools. A pronounced negative relationship between number of referrals received and GPA is also to be noticed in the Table 10 data: the GPA continues to decline with only very minor interruptions as the number of referrals received increases. While this cross-sectional analysis cannot ascertain which is cause and which is effect, it appears that getting into increasing amounts of trouble goes hand in hand with doing more and more poorly academically. This interpretation applies equally in all three schools.

Student reports of punishment for misbehavior provide an additional source of data on the incidence of misbehavior. Table 11 shows the percentage of students at each school who reported on the questionnaire that they had received after-school detention or had been sent out of class, the number of times it had happened during the current year, and the reasons for being punished. To be sure, these items, like the school referral records, include probable differences among schools in policy enforcement.[1] The data show that 64 percent of both Roberts and Fort Hudson students said that they had received after-school detention, with only 25 percent of Lake students so reporting. The Fort Hudson figure was not unexpected, given the large number of referrals reported earlier and the fact that most

[1]The survey was administered in March 1983. These figures would be higher had the survey been administered at the end of the school year.

Table 11

Students' Reports of Punishment for Misbehavior at Three Middle Schools
(Percent of Students Selecting Responses for Questionnaire Items*)

| Item | Response | Roberts | Lake | Fort Hudson |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ever received after-school detention? | Yes | 64 | 25 | 64 |
| | No | 36 | 76 | 36 |
| Number of times this year: | None | 36 | 75 | 36 |
| | 1 | 24 | 13 | 20 |
| | 2 | 10 | 6 | 9 |
| | 3-5 | 16 | 5 | 18 |
| | >5 | 13 | 1 | 17 |
| Reasons: | talking | 37 | 8 | 10 |
| | disruptive behavior | 9 | 7 | 14 |
| | not working | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| | fighting | 2 | <1 | 8 |
| | lateness/cutting | 13 | 3 | 15 |
| | eating | 8 | 2 | 14 |
| | not having a pass | 1 | <1 | 2 |
| Ever been sent out of class? | yes | 29 | 45 | 25 |
| | no | 71 | 55 | 75 |
| Number of times this year: | None | 69 | 57 | 76 |
| | 1 | 16 | 18 | 13 |
| | 2 | 5 | 7 | 5 |
| | 3-5 | 5 | 11 | 4 |
| | >5 | 4 | 7 | 3 |
| Reasons: | talking | 12 | 19 | 10 |
| | disruptive behavior | 10 | 20 | 12 |
| | not working | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| | fighting | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| | lateness/cutting | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | eating | >1 | 1 | 0 |
| | not having a pass | 1 | 0 | 2 |

*Total number of respondents--538 students at Roberts School, 455 at Lake School, and 552 at Fort Hudson School.

of these referrals specified detention as a punishment. The Roberts figure was surprising, however, because there were many fewer disciplinary referrals (less than one-fourth as many at Roberts School as at Fort Hudson) and because there was no school-wide detention; Roberts teachers individually imposed detention. The student self-report data indicate that the rate of misbehavior at Roberts must have been considerably higher than the office records of referrals revealed. Those misbehaving at Roberts also apparently misbehaved as repeatedly as those at Fort Hudson school; 29 percent of all Roberts students and 35 percent of Fort Hudson students reported more than three detentions during the period covered by the questionnaire--the first 7 months of the school year.

Turning to the students' self-reports on having been sent out of class, we find here that Lake School had the highest percent (45 percent), with Roberts and Fort Hudson again similar (29 percent and 25 percent, respectively). This pattern continues to hold for students sent out of class three times or more during the school year.

In general, then, the students' own reports of punishment for misbehavior suggest a different ordering of schools based on incidence of misbehavior, with Roberts and Fort Hudson very similar and Lake School unique in its low student report of detention and high report of being sent out of class. The fact that Lake teachers typically do not provide any after school detention probably accounts for much of this difference.

As with the office referrals, patterns may differ by type of misbehavior. Talking in class was clearly the reason for punishment reported most often by Roberts students; 37 percent of all respondents reported that they had received detention during the current year for talking, and 12 percent reported that they had been sent out of class for talking. Lake students were second in reporting this kind of misbehavior--18 percent of all respondents reported this as a reason for detention, and 19 percent reported

it as a reason for being sent out of class. Similar percents (13 percent and 15 percent) of Roberts and Fort Hudson students reported detention for lateness or cutting, compared to only 3 percent of Lake students. This misbehavior seemed seldom to result in the student's being sent out of class at any of the three schools. Lake School students were conspicuous in that 20 percent of them reported being sent out of class for disruptive behavior, although only 7 percent were detained for this. At Roberts and Fort Hudson, disruptive behavior and being sent out of class were reported by roughly the same percentage of students as the reason for after-school detention. Fort Hudson students also reported considerably higher percentages of referrals for eating and for fighting than did students at the other two schools.

Summarization of the data in Table 11 is difficult because of specific nature of school differences and similarities. For example, punishment for talking in class was highest at Roberts, while disruptive behavior was highest at Lake. On the other hand, punishment for lateness and cutting was equally high at Roberts and Fort Hudson, but seldom imposed at Lake. Fighting and rules regarding eating resulted in many more referrals at Fort Hudson than at the other two schools. These and other variations illustrate the complexity of school differences and the need to consider the type of misbehavior as well as the incidence of misbehavior in describing school disciplinary actions.

Teacher perceptions of student misbehavior are shown in Table 12. Approximately three-fourths of Fort Hudson and Lake teachers reported that they considered discipline a major problem in their school in contrast to less than a third of Roberts teachers. However, though similar percentages of teachers in Fort Hudson and Lake schools viewed discipline as a major problem, they reported quite different trends. Fort Hudson teachers were more likely to report that problems were decreasing (including class cuts and tardies in particular), whereas Lake teachers were more likely to report that

problems were increasing than decreasing. Most Lake teachers and Roberts teachers, however, reported no change, although Roberts teachers were reporting no change from a "minor problem" and Lake teachers were reporting no change from a "major problem."

Table 12

Teacher Perceptions of Student Misbehavior at Three Middle Schools (Percent of Teachers in Each School Selecting Responses to Questionnaire Items)

| Item | Response | Roberts | Lake | Fort Hudson |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How much is discipline a problem in this school: | a major problem | 31 | 75 | 70 |
| | a minor problem | 59 | 25 | 30 |
| | not a problem | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Change in discipline problems in the last couple of years: | increased | 28 | 26 | 21 |
| | decreased | 16 | 17 | 41 |
| | about the same | 56 | 57 | 38 |
| Change in class tardies from previous years: | more | 35 | 52 | 16 |
| | less | 19 | 20 | 45 |
| | same number | 46 | 28 | 39 |
| Change in class cuts from previous years: | more | 0 | 46 | 1[illegible] |
| | less | 46 | 13 | 35 |
| | same number | 54 | 42 | 48 |
| Portion of my class time used for managing discipline problems: | less than 10% | 17 | 24 | 44 |
| | about 10% | 48 | 24 | 29 |
| | about 20% | 24 | 34 | 18 |
| | more than 20% | 10 | 17 | 9 |
| Portion of my school day taken up by discipline problems: | less than 10% | 38 | 26 | 32 |
| | about 10% | 34 | 30 | 35 |
| | about 20% | 24 | 26 | 18 |
| | more than 20% | 3 | 19 | 15 |

Total number of respondents: 29 teachers at Roberts School and at Lake School and 34 at Fort Hudson School.

Another index of the incidence of student misbehavior is the amount of time discipline problems take away from teaching. Approximately half of the Lake School teachers reported that 20 percent or more of their classroom time and of their school day was used for managing discipline problems, while between a fourth and a third of the teachers at the other two schools reported spending that much time devoted to discipline. Evidently the high number of referrals at Fort Hudson did not burden the regular business of teaching any more or as much as at schools having far fewer referrals.

In summary, the data on student misbehavior suggest a complex answer to the question of policy effectiveness. Despite descriptions of substantial student misbehavior from self-reports in all three schools, the official records indicated that Roberts had much less misbehavior of most kinds than either of the other two schools--partial exceptions being failure to appear for detention, pushing and shoving, refusal to work, and insubordination. Fort Hudson seemed to have by far the highest incidence of misbehavior of various kinds, especially in the classroom. Lake School seemed to have the most conflict among students--especially fighting--the most serious defiance of teachers, and the worst absenteeism.

In terms of staff perceptions, a sizable majority of teachers at both Lake School and Fort Hudson School reported that discipline was a major problem in their school, but while many Lake School teachers saw a worsening of the situation, more Fort Hudson teachers saw an improvement. To some extent that perception of improvement may have been an illusion based on staff satisfaction with policy, or it may have represented improvement from a previous high level of discipline problems that neither of the other two schools had experienced (interview data suggested that interracial relations and fighting had been a problem several years earlier). The same distortion may have been present at Roberts because student self-reports and individual

records indicated higher levels of misbehavior (possibly of a less serious kind, like talking and absence) than would be inferred from the referral rate.

## Policy Effectiveness as a Construct

The three criteria of policy effectiveness--teachers' satisfaction with policy, students' acceptance of policy, and the incidence of student misbehavior--might be expected to influence one another. Where students do not accept policy, one might expect a higher incidence of student misbehavior. Where student misbehavior is higher, one might expect less teacher satisfaction with policy because it would not appear to be working. What evidence for such relationships exist in the data?

Students' acceptance of policy--that is, the proportion of students who were disaffected with too many rules or unfair enforcement of rules--was fairly uniform across the three schools. The two exceptions were the percentages of students who reported that teachers were too strict and those who volunteered rules they believed needed changes. Both of these percentages were highest at Fort Hudson and lowest at Lake, although the differences in strictness were not substantial and did not distinguish Fort Hudson School from Lake School. In all three schools rules mentioned as needing changing were principally those on eating. Associated with these limited interschool differences is the problem of rule specificity, which affects the relationship between student acceptance of policy and misbehavior. The ordering of schools by incidence of misbehavior varied with the type of misbehavior and the source of evidence. No particular ordering was consistently apparent in any of the data. Therefore, we would not offer student acceptance of policy as a factor accounting for differences in the incidence of misbehavior.

The relationship of student misbehavior to teachers' satisfaction is

also complex. The ordering of schools according to levels of teachers' satisfaction was clear: Fort Hudson teachers were most satisfied, Roberts teachers were a strong second, and Lake teachers were least satisfied. While the data on student misbehavior provide some evidence that Lake students were the most insubordinate and abusive and engaged in the most fighting, Fort Hudson students usually far exceeded Roberts students in referrals for misbehavior. In fact, Fort Hudson students received the most referrals for many types of misbehavior, and Fort Hudson teachers were almost as likely as Lake teachers to report that discipline was a major problem in their school. Hence, teachers' satisfaction with policy is not clearly related to the incidence of student misbehavior.

In sum, policy effectiveness is a complex phenomenon. There was no evidence of a positive relationship between teachers' satisfaction with policy and students' acceptance of policy, nor was there any evidence that either was associated with a low incidence of student misbehavior. Possibly our survey questions were too general to measure teachers' dissatisfaction with or students' nonacceptance of particular rules. Possibly a more concentrated analysis of the satisfaction levels of teachers submitting many referrals or the acceptance levels of students receiving many referrals would reveal patterns not discernible across the faculty and student body as a whole. Such analyses, however, are beyond the scope of the present project.

It is interesting to note that two of the measures of student acceptance of policy revealed small interschool differences that were the opposite of differences among schools on teacher satisfaction measures. Whereas Fort Hudson teachers were the most satisfied and Lake teachers the least satisfied, more Fort Hudson students nominated rules for change than did students at Lake School. Similarly, more Fort Hudson students said that their teachers were too strict about rules than did students at Lake School. (The Roberts data did not strengthen this pattern, but neither did they

contradict it.) While these differences are too small to warrant a hypothesis, they should alert those engaging in further research to possible tradeoffs between teacher satisfaction with policy and student acceptance of policy.

## Factors Accounting for Differences in Policy Effectiveness

In our introductory section, we suggested that differences in policy effectiveness would be related to differences in policy content, policy initiation and modification, and policy enforcement. In addition, we suggested that differences in characteristics of schools, their students, and their staffs might influence policy effectiveness. We now attempt to answer the second research question in terms of these variables. Given that policy effectiveness has proven such a weak construct, however, we consider each criterion of effectiveness separately.

Factors Accounting for Differences in Teachers' Satisfaction. The strong ordering of schools based on teachers' satisfaction with policy--Fort Hudson highest, Roberts close behind, and Lake lowest--was compared with the ordering of schools based on policy components. Fort Hudson and Lake Schools both distinctly emphasized protection of the school from unruly students in their written policies, whereas Roberts School took a less protective stance. On the other hand, Lake School's written policy also included the intervention of the student management specialist during inschool suspension of misbehavers as an ambitious corrective device, whereas Roberts' written policy was more general in advocating correction and Fort Hudson's provided no corrective emphasis. Therefore, it would be difficult to argue that the schools' written codes--in either their protective or corrective function--differed in ways parallel to the ordering of teachers' satisfaction. However, the Lake principal's articulated policy differed from the written code and, as articulated, seemed less protective than either Fort

Hudson's or Roberts'. Furthermore, Lake School had virtually abandoned the particular strategy of correction via inschool suspension. Hence, the ordering of schools in terms of articulated policy would put Fort Hudson as most protective and Lake as least protective. We would venture the hypothesis, then, that the degree of protective emphasis in policy as articulated will influence the degree of teachers' satisfaction with policy. Whether the satisfaction of Roberts teachers was also attributable to the consistency with which a corrective approach was articulated is conjectural, but we would caution against the inference that teachers are not satisfied by corrective policy thrusts. Instead we would venture to say that such policy thrusts will lead to dissatisfaction if they are perceived as weakening the protection of the school from unruly students.

The ordering of schools according to teacher satisfaction with policy was also consistent with the weak ordering of schools by policy initiation and modification. Fort Hudson teachers, by self report and from accounts of their team structure, were more involved in developing policy than teachers at either of the other schools. On the other hand, the substantial involvement of Lake teachers a few years earlier in developing the current written code did not support current satisfaction. At present, they wished for more participation and were dissatisfied with procedures for establishing rules. Because, on paper, they had a "house" structure that should have functioned as actively as Fort Hudson's team structure, Lake teachers' dissatisfaction is all the more interesting. Perhaps their dissatisfaction resulted from a perceived discrepancy between formal structure and its actual implementation.

Teachers' satisfaction and administrators' policy enforcement also seemed related. Fort Hudson administrators were strictest in enforcing rules, and Lake administrators were least strict. The percentage of teachers reporting that some students got away with breaking rules more than others--a

measure of inconsistency in administrators' enforcement--was highest at Lake and lowest at Fort Hudson. Hence, we would hypothesize that teachers' satisfaction with policy will be positively related to the strictness and consistency in administrators' enforcement of policy.

Factors Accounting for Differences in Students' Acceptance. The data on students' acceptance of policy really do not permit an ordering of schools as such. The general pattern of questionnaire results and interview remarks was that of similarity rather than difference among schools. Hence, it is not really possible to identify influences of policy variables on differences in students' acceptance of policy.

It was surprising, given our information about the active referral-and-detention program at Fort Hudson School, that the percentage of Fort Hudson students reporting that there were too many rules was not higher than percentages at the other two schools, which had less formal and less extensive policy enforcement. Similarly, despite the finding that more Fort Hudson teachers, on average, reported that they were strict in enforcing rules, the percentage of Fort Hudson students (46) reporting that their teachers were too strict was scarcely different from the percentage at Roberts (43) and only slightly higher than the percentage at Lake (35). Evidently Fort Hudson students were not exceptionally distressed by their school's discipline policy. In fact, further information from interviews suggested that the students at Fort Hudson had at least as punitive an attitude as the staff towards serious student misbehavior.

The one indicator of student acceptance that did register differences among the three schools was the percentage of students nominating rules for change, which was highest at Fort Hudson and lowest at Lake. It is possible that the differential rate of response to the open-ended question "Which school rule needs changing?" reflected the level of indifference to the questionnaire or to school policy rather than the level of nonacceptance of

rules. Given Fort Hudson students' strict classroom regime and the Lake students' reported disinterest towards school, it is possible that Fort Hudson students felt most obliged, and Lake students least obliged, to finish the questionnaire.

It is also possible, however, that the elaborate code at Fort Hudson did produce more objections to specific rules. Certainly, the fact that Fort Hudson students singled out the rule on detention indicated a focus on certain rules. In addition, it is possible that the relative laxness in enforcement of some rules at Lake School reduced students' concern about rules. The feelings of some of the Lake teachers interviewed, that students became "counseling-wise" and "heroes" to their peers as a result of disciplinary encounters with office personnel, suggest that at least some misbehaving Lake students felt at ease with their school's policy.

Factors Accounting for Differences in Student Misbehavior. The differences to be accounted for in misbehavior are heterogeneous. The data do not permit a simple ordering of schools on the incidence of student misbehavior. Instead, different kinds of misbehavior seemed to be more common at different schools, and impressions of misbehavior differed among students, teachers, and administrators. Before considering the variation in misbehavior, it will be useful to order the schools by those factors thought to predispose students to misbehavior--the physical characteristics of the school and the socioeconomic characteristics of the students.

One might argue that differences in physical facilities contribute to student behavior problems. With respect to school characteristics, Fort Hudson School had perhaps the most difficult situation because it was located in two separate buildings a few miles apart. The separate sixth grade building appeared comfortably spacious, but the combined seventh-eighth grade building was somewhat cramped with narrower corridors and many tight staircases where knots of students could generate fights. The buildings were

also physically separated from the neighborhoods of the students, which meant that most students were bused to the school. However, the two other schools were operating under less than ideal conditions as well. Roberts School had an overcrowded building. Lake School was in an adequate, if aging, building, but the staff had complained about the lack of recreational space for students on rainy days and the resulting disciplinary problems in the cafeteria. Fort Hudson and Lake each had more adequate school grounds than did Roberts School.

The characteristics of students differed among the schools, as noted earlier (Table 1). Given that Fort Hudson had the highest percentage of students eligible for the Federal lunch program and the highest proportion of minority students, one might argue that these socioeconomic characteristics contributed to a student body that was more challenging than those of the other two schools. This characterization is consistent with the anecdotal evidence produced by the staff at Fort Hudson regarding the severe problems in some students' homes and neighborhoods that led to some of the conflict at that school.

It is more difficult to complete the ordering of schools according to student characteristics, however. Roberts had more Federal-lunch students and minority students than Lake, yet Lake staff members described far more serious home and neighborhood problems among their students. Although it is possible that the Lake staff members, like Fort Hudson staff members, tended to emphasize the "problems that students bring to school" more than Roberts staff members, we would rate the level of challenge posed to the school by Lake students as higher than that posed by Roberts students. Indeed, it is plausible that Lake students posed nearly as serious a challenge as Fort Hudson students.

How do these background factors relate to observed differences in student misbehavior? The most obvious difference in the misbehavior data

among schools--that Fort Hudson had by far the highest number of disciplinary referrals and suspensions, and Roberts the lowest--would suggest the hypothesis that the more impoverished and anomic the conditions of students' families and neighborhoods, the higher the incidence of misbehavior. Such records of misbehavior, however, may well reflect differences in record-keeping policies as much as differences in the actual incidence of misbehavior. Fort Hudson teachers had developed a policy of writing referrals that was consistent with the management of a regular schoolwide detention system. Further, this school's administrators had developed a policy of "automatic" suspension for serious misbehavior like fighting. In contrast, Roberts teachers followed a policy of supervising their own detention of students without referring the student to the office unless the student failed to show. The frequency of referrals at Roberts for failing to appear for detention was almost as high as at Fort Hudson, which had a schoolwide detention system. However, Roberts administrators followed a policy of rarely suspending students. Lake and Roberts differed in the way they kept records on misbehavior: Lake used an office log to record all referrals, including those by other students or parents, whereas Roberts kept a file of written "incident reports" and "referrals" which apparently were not prepared (or filed centrally) in all instances of detention. Thus, while we recognize some validity in the wide disparity of recorded referrals among the schools in ordering the schools according to their written records on misbehavior--i.e., Fort Hudson highest and Roberts lowest--we suspect the numbers of actual occurences of student misbehavior would bring these three schools more closely together.

In particular, we would suggest the following variants on this ordering, based on the analysis of reasons for referrals and students' self-reports of behavior that led to punishment. With respect to minor student misbehavior in the classroom, we suspect that Roberts and Fort Hudson

were more similar than the referral files suggest. The high numbers of referrals for unsatisfactory work at Fort Hudson were balanced by the complaints of Roberts teachers in interviews that getting students to work could be difficult. Roberts teachers simply did not refer students for this sort of misbehavior. If Lake students had lower rates of minor classroom misbehavior, it may have been because the teacher usually had a more serious offense to write on a referral--Lake students had the highest incidence of insubordination and abusive language directed to teachers. With respect to misbehavior outside the classroom, Lake probably also equalled or surpassed Fort Hudson. Certainly truancy and leaving the campus were more common at Lake, and we suspect that fighting was more common as well. Possibly fighting hadn't drawn as much attention there as it had at Fort Hudson because fighting at Fort Hudson had involved racial tensions at one time and had usually led to suspensions.

The case of fighting is interesting because it was a serious problem at both Fort Hudson and Lake to which the two schools had responded in very different ways. If we assume that initial fighting was really the students "bringing their problems to school" from homes and neighborhoods, the question remains why neither school was able to reduce the incidence of fighting appreciably over the year. Fort Hudson had a punitive, protective policy of suspension accompanied by but not coupled with a preventive program. Neither the policy nor the program seemed to reduce fighting substantially. We would attribute the lack of responsiveness to the lack of coupling prevention with correction--in particular, using discretion in the general prevention of fighting rather than more intensive followup counseling with students who had incurred penalties for fighting, especially those who had been suspended. Lake School followed a counseling approach to reducing the incidence of fighting, whereby the student management specialist would hold students out of class until the conflict had cooled. However, by not

sternly penalizing misbehaving students, Lake School failed to convey a firm message about the unacceptability of fighting and the school's resolve to protect other students. Hence, we would hypothesize that student responsiveness will be greater where protective and corrective efforts are integrated than where either--or both--proceed separately.

## G. REFORMULATION AND SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES

In this concluding section, we have collected the hypotheses that have been formulated in the course of these comparative analyses. We began with two very general concepts: policy components--content, initiation, and enforcement--and policy effectiveness--acceptance by teachers and students and incidence of student misbehavior. We set out to identify the factors accounting for differences in discipline policy and its effectiveness. Our search included the internal dynamics of these constructs as well as possible influences of the characteristics of students and teachers, the discipline philosophies of teachers and administrators, and the district context. The hypotheses we now propose are consistent with the comparative analyses of case study data. These are offered both as captioned summaries of our findings and as generalities requiring more particularized examinations in new school settings. As hypotheses, they are simply conjectural statements of relationships that have evolved from our school comparisons but that, on the basis of our very limited sampling, are only tentative and assuredly must be tested using new data sources.

In presenting these hypotheses, we must first formulate some of our central concepts. Our initial definitions appear less useful to us now. Rather than policy content, we will distinguish between, on the one hand, the codified policy present in written rules for the behavior of students and school staff members and, on the other hand, the articulated policy present in what school staff members and students say. Although it makes sense to speak of the initiation and modification of codified policy, a more general term is necessary to refer to the reinterpretation of articulated policy, so we prefer the term policy development to cover both these phenomena. By policy development we mean the ongoing discussion about what the rules mean and how to interpret and respond to student behavior in light of the rules.

Policy development will be treated as a collective phenomenon within which the participation and influence of administrators, teachers, and students can be distinguished, although we have little to say about student involvement in policy development.

We prefer the term policy implementation to the narrower concept of policy enforcement, which we will treat as an aspect of such implementation along with corrective action in enforcing rules according to policy and programs or strategies to prevent rule infractions. We distinguish the roles of various members of the administrative staff and teachers in implementing policy. Administrative implementation includes (1) communicating policy to teachers, students, and parents; (2) monitoring the behavior covered by rules; (3) handling referrals from teachers; (4) imposing prescribed penalties for noncompliance by teachers and students; and (5) conducting programs or strategies to reduce noncompliance by teachers and students.

Teacher implementation of policy is differentiated from administrative implementation. While teachers too communicate school policy to students, parents, and other--especially new--teachers, they also articulate and codify supplementary rules for their classes within the general framework of school policy. With respect to both school and classroom policy, they monitor behavior, impose penalties, refer students to administrators for additional punishment or correction, and act in ways consistent or inconsistent with administrators' discipline policies.

Teacher acceptance of school policy, originally conceptualized as interacting with policy components to influence outcomes, is now replaced by more specific concepts, including teacher satisfaction with administrative enforcement, staff conesiveness, and teacher perception of student responsiveness to policy implementation.

Student acceptance of policy is also replaced by more specific concepts like perceived credibility of sanctions and student responsiveness

--i.e., change in student behavior and attitude following communication of policy or another preventive or corrective action by staff. The data on change are only inferential in our current study because we lack "before" and "after" data. Student misbehavior refers to the frequency of student behavior proscribed by rules.

The foregoing conceptual changes and redefinitions require operationalizing and grounding in a variety of data sources. Since these changes evolved from our study rather than preceded it, we lack data for some of these reformulated concepts. Therefore, our listing of the hypotheses summarizing our comparisons of discipline policies in three middle schools includes only those statements supported by our school data. In an area of research where so few comparative studies have been made, it is prudent to limit our report to data-based conjectures.

Summary of Hypotheses

1. The greater the involvement of teachers in developing school discipline policy, the greater the emphasis on protection in codified policy.

2. The greater the proportion of students coming from lower-status groups, the greater the emphasis on protection in codified policy.

3. The stronger the belief of school personnel that schools can serve all students, the greater the emphasis on correction in policy articulation.

4. The stronger and more stable the organization of teachers, both inside and outside the school, the greater the involvement of teachers in policy development.

5. The greater the separation of administrative responsibilities for protection and correction, the stronger the enforcement of rules and the weaker the implementation of corrective programs.

6. The greater the emphasis on protection in codified policy, the greater the teacher satisfaction with school policy.

7. The greater the administrators' strictness and consistency in enforcement of rules, the greater the teacher satisfaction with school policy.

8. The more consistent the administrative enforcement of rules, the more consistent the teachers' enforcement of rules.

9. The greater the continuing involvement of teachers in developing school policy, the greater the teachers' implementation of policy.

10. The greater the teachers' satisfaction with administrative articulation and implementation of policy, the greater the teachers' efforts to implement policy.

11. The greater the proportion of students coming from low-income and/or anomic home and neighborhood conditions, the higher the incidence of student misbehavior.

12. The more that policy, as codified or articulated, emphasizes either protection or correction rather than integrating the two, the higher the incidence of student misbehavior.

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## H. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Teacher School Discipline Policy Questionnaire
Appendix 2: Student Rules Questionnaire

Appendix 1
Teacher School Discipline Policy Questionnaire

For each sentence below, circle the underlined word(s) which you believe best describes your school.

Example: Compared to other middle schools in this district, I believe teacher morale is a) high b) average c) low, in our school.

1. In my opinion, our school's philosophy regarding student discipline is a) fully b) partially c) minimally endorsed by our teaching staff.

2. Our school's procedures for establishing student disciplinary rules are a) fully b) partially c) minimally supported by our teaching staff.

3. Our teachers are a) unanimous b) nearly unanimous c) split in their agreement with their administrator's management of student discipline.

4. I would prefer there to be a) more b) less c) no change in teacher participation in deciding student disciplinary policies in our school.

5. Our school's discipline policies are a) sufficient and appropriate b) in need of some minor change c) in need of a major overhaul.

6. Disciplinary problems a) have decreased b) have increased c) are about the same as in the last couple years.

7. There seems to be a) more b) less c) the same number of class tardies as in previous years.

8. There seems to be a) more b) less c) the same number of class cuts as in previous years.

9. Student discipline is a) a major b) a minor c) not a problem in our school.

10. Managing student discipline in my classes take about a) less than 10% b) 10% c) 20% d) more than 20% of my class time.

11. Student discipline problems take about a) less than 10% b) 10% c) 20% d) more than 20% of my school day.

12. I would a) always b) generally c) rarely consider revision of my classroom rules if these are questioned by my students.

13. It is a) very b) moderately c) not especially important for students to learn to make their own decisions about obeying rules.

14. In making my classroom rules, I a) generally b) sometimes c) seldom d) never involve students.

15. I have been at this school for a) one b) two c) three to five d) six to ten e) more than ten years.

16. I have been a public school teacher for a) one to two b) three to five c) six to ten d) more than ten years.

Appendix 1
(Continued)

Below are six school rules (A-F) regarding behavior and a list of possible teacher comments or beliefs (1-10) about these rules. To the right of each "comment" are columns referring to each of the rules. Check as many of the boxes you need to, to describe your feelings or beliefs about each comment.

Rule A: Students are not allowed to bring radios or tape recorders to school except with special permission.

Rule B: Students absent from class who are not on the daily absentee list shall be reported for disciplinary action.

Rule C: Students late to their class more than once shall be reported for disciplinary action.

Rule D: Students shall be sent from class for disciplinary action for physical abuse of other children.

Rule E: Students repeatedly disrupting classroom instruction shall be reported for disciplinary action.

Rule F: Students who defy a teacher are subject to disciplinary action.

| Comments | Rule A (radios) | Rule B (cuts) | Rule C (tardies) | Rule D (abuse) | Rule E (disrupt) | Rule F (refuse) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. This rule violates student rights. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. It is the total staff's business to enforce this rule. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. This rule causes more problems than it solves. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. This rule is unnecessary. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. Some students get away with breaking this rule more than othrs. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. The penalties for breaking this rule are too light. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. I am lenient in enforcing this rule. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. This rule affects very few students and need not be formalized. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. I participated in developing this rule. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10. I am very strict in enforcing this rule. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Please feel free to add any additional comments or clarifications on the back of this page which you feel would help us to understand the student discipline practices in your school. We thank you again for your cooperation.

Appendix 2
Student Rules Questionnaire

Your school was picked as one of several middle schools participating in a University of Oregon study of school rules for student behavior. We have been asking questions of administrators and teachers and now it's your turn. We would like you to tell us how YOU feel about school rules.

You do not have to answer these questions but if you do, we ask you to be as honest as you can. Your answers will help us learn how rules are working in your school. Since this paper does not have your name on it and is sent directly to us, no one at your school will be able to see or read what you have written. On most questions, circle one of the underlined words as your answer.

EXAMPLE: I try to be on time for all my classes. a) Yes b) No

For questions with lines after, write out your answer on those lines. If you need more space use the back of this page.

When you have finished, fold your paper, place it in the envelope, seal it and return it to your teacher.

1. I received a student rights and responsibilities booklet listing my school's rules. a) Yes b) No
2. I think my school has too many rules. a) Yes b) No
3. I believe that rules are fairly enforced in my school. a) Yes b) No
4. Most of my teachers are too strict about rules. a) Yes b) No
5. Did you ever do something and afterwards be surprised to learn it was against school rules? a) Yes b) No
6. Have you ever received after-school detention? a) Yes b) No
7. How many times this school year?_____
8. What was the main reason?_____
9. Have you ever been sent out of class? a) Yes b) No
10. How many times since last September 1982?_____
11. What was the main reason?_____
12. How often do you get away with breaking rules? a) Never b) Sometimes c) Most of the time
13. How often are you blamed for breaking rules when it was not your fault? a) Never b) Occasionally c) Sometimes
14. Which school rule needs changing?_____
15. Is there any rule your school should have which it doesn't have now?